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THE TOR HILL.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," "GAIETIES AND GRAVITIES,"

&c. &c.

" Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Thro' joy and thro' torments, thro' glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart;
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

Thos. Moore.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE TOR HILL.

CHAPTER I.

Of haughty heart, and prouder mien,
His soul's remorselessness is seen
Stamp'd on his features.
Vengeance his object, not redress,
He lives to scorn, hate, spoil, oppress,
His fellow creatures.

SIR Lionel Fitzmaurice was the natural son of a nobleman, who, without ever condescending to notice him, gave him such an education as was considered sufficient, at that period, for any person destined to the soldier's profession; procured him a subordinate station in the army;

and abandoned him to his fate. During his infancy and youth, his violent passions had never experienced the salutary restraint of parental authority; nor had the gentler sympathies of his nature, whenever he was inclined to put them forth, found any kindred affections around which they could entwine, and expand their blossoms. His fierce and bad qualities had thus gathered strength from indulgence, while whatever was amiable in his temperament had been blighted by coldness and neglect. Little, indeed, of the milk of human kindness entered into his composition; but that little, being forbidden to find vent in its natural channel, struck inwards, and, turning to bitterness and gall, disordered his whole moral system. Even as a boy, he began to feel himself a solitary and an outcast. He had no relations, no friends, no endearments, no holidays, no presents, no indulgences of any sort. Everybody, on the contrary, seemed to shun and be ashamed of him; his father's steward, when he called to pay for his schooling, never asked to see him; the schoolmaster, taking advantage of his for-

lorn situation, and using him as a sort of scapegoat for boys whom he wished to favour, treated him with unmerited severity ; and when the youth, not less quick to perceive the wrong than indignant at its infliction, asked himself the meaning of the manifest injustice he was suffering from the world, he was utterly at a loss to account for it. A full head taller than any boy of his age, he not only surpassed them all in feats of strength, gymnastic sports, and those military exercises which formed so prominent a part of education, but equally eclipsed them in the few mental pursuits that were intermingled with these rougher struggles of the body.

At every fresh indignity and outrage that he endured, he concealed the malignant hatred which he was impotent to wreak; but, retiring into the gloomy cavern of his own breast, dropped one by one the seeds of revenge into his heart ; and, suffering his thoughts to sit brooding upon what he had planted, looked forward with delight to the moment when it should be ripened into a full and spreading

vengeance. His wrongs were even endured with a sort of rancorous pleasure for the sake of the imaginary retribution that he conjured up ; for, in his solitary moods of hate, he not only blighted, in fancy, the prospects and happiness of his persecutors, but actually writhed his limbs as if he were trampling upon their bodies, and plunging his dagger into their hearts. Vindictiveness became thus early combined with dissimulation, and the two evil qualities which were engrafted upon the boy, were through life destined to "grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength."

Soon after he had attained full manhood, and perfected himself in all soldierly accomplishments, he learnt that his noble father, in expectation of a visit from the King, who was then making a progress through the South of England, had proclaimed a great tournament and jousting to be held at his castle; and published a challenge to all comers, being gentlemen, to fight at the barriers with spear, battle-axe, and two-handed sword. The Earl had made suitable festive preparations at his baronial castle,

but more especially for the tournament, which he knew to be the King's favourite diversion. Lionel, who had never seen his parent since he was an infant, and whose numerous letters, claiming from him some sort of recognition or assistance, had never been answered, deemed this a favourable opportunity for claiming what he conceived to be his natural rights, or at least for gratifying his long-cherished animosity, should his claim be disallowed, by exposing his father before the King and the assembled court and neighbourhood.

For this purpose, he presented himself to be enrolled as one of the answerers to the challenge, declaring himself at the same time to be illegitimate; and upon being told by the Earl that he could not be received, the invitation being expressly limited to all such as were gentlemen by birth, he made himself known to his astonished father, and upbraided him with not only having brought him into the world without assigning him any place in society, but with opposing his efforts when he wished to carve out his own way to distinction with his sword.

The Earl, who had many reasons for wishing to conceal that he had such a son, was peremptory in rejecting him, forbidding him at his peril ever again to cross the threshold of his door, and they parted with mutual anger and defiance. Lionel, however, instead of submitting to this repulse, armed himself *cap à pie* on the day of the encounter, mounted a goodly war-horse, forced himself into the lists, warning all those who would oppose him to desist as they valued their lives; and when the King enquired the cause of this disturbance, he threw himself from his horse, raised his visor, and, falling upon one knee, stated in a few words who he was, and the motive that had influenced him, which was a desire to devote himself to the service of his sovereign, and to prove by his exploits that he was not unworthy of that honour.

Harry, who valued himself upon his own comeliness and stature, and always admired those qualities in others, and who had besides a natural son of his own, whom he destined to high honours and distinctions, was not less

struck with the commanding figure than the spirited deportment of the young warrior, and angrily rebuked the Earl for his conduct; declaring that his son was a marvellous proper man-at-arms, and promised to do honour to his parents, although he might not be honoured by them. He commanded him to be admitted instantly among the combatants, termed him his champion of the bar, in allusion to the heraldic mark of illegitimacy, and was so well pleased with his prowess and courage that upon quitting the castle, which he did a day sooner than he had intended, he sternly warned the Earl to provide properly for his son if he expected any further favours from his sovereign. A hint of this sort was not to be neglected with impunity. The intimidated father sent an apologetical letter to his child, enclosing a bond for the payment of a yearly maintenance, which Lionel cancelled and returned to him with a few words of contemptuous insult, declaring that, as the tardy boon had been extorted by fear of his King, not proffered from spontaneous affection for himself, he scorned to accept it. He had

exposed his father to royal censure, he had deeply compromised him with his own family, he had spurned his offers of reconciliation, he had proudly rejected his bounty. This was his first great revenge, and perhaps his sweetest; for as his father had entailed a disgrace upon him which was a material impediment to advancement in those days, and had aggravated this injury by subsequent neglect, he held himself warranted to consider him as his worst enemy through all the stages of life, and combined therefore in his hatred, the past, the present, and the future.

But in executing this public vengeance he had made notorious the irregularity of his birth, he had confirmed all the disabilities and degradations to which it subjected him, and had thus widened the breach between himself and the world. His individual enemies too were furnished with a ready reproach, although it could only be uttered at peril of their lives; for he felt the stigma to be so indelible, and at the same time so cruel and unjust, that his sword leapt from its scabbard whenever he was thus taunted,

as if, at least, to vindicate his claim to the legitimate right of killing his fellow-creatures whenever they offended him. One benefit accrued to him from his daring demeanour at the jousting we have mentioned. Sir Giles Hungerford, who was present upon that occasion, and had been captivated with a stubborn energy and reckless valour so congenial to his own, introduced himself to him for the purpose of suggesting some improvement in his armour, and thus commenced an acquaintance which ended in his appointing him his squire. The war with Scotland soon after broke out, and at the battle of Flodden Field, as already related, he saved the life of his patron, and obtained the honour of knighthood for his brave deeds. Improving the ascendancy he had gained, upon this occasion, over the mind of the generous and grateful Sir Giles, he became his friend, confidant, and adviser; and, when his services in the field were not immediately required, was constituted comptroller and manager of all the Hungerford manors and estates in Somersetshire and elsewhere. In this department his abilities appeared to be not less

conspicuous than his qualifications as a soldier ; so that his employer, who abhorred all financial and domestic regulations,—every thing in short that was not military,—gladly deputed to him the entire management of his affairs.

As the wound in his head, from which he suffered occasional inconvenience during several years, prevented his accompanying Sir Giles when he was ordered to France, the latter installed him regularly into the Tor House as his representative, invested him with full legal powers for acting as a principal in every thing that concerned the Hungerford property, appointed him the guardian of his child, and finally willed him his heir in the event of Cecil's decease ; a contingency which the boy's precarious state of health rendered not unlikely to occur.

Hoping to atone, in some degree, for his own want of family honours, by an alliance with one who possessed them, Sir Lionel had married a woman of an ancient and distinguished name, but without fortune or any other recommendation. His daughter, the beautiful Beatrice, was the result of this union, which, however, was of too

incongruous a nature to confer happiness upon either party. The high-born lady proved to be as violent and haughty as her husband was cold and contumelious ; her noble friends refused to notice them ; mutual disappointment engendered reciprocal accusations ; he reproached her with pride and poverty, she recriminated by an allusion to his ignominious birth ; he afforded her the excuse of jealousy to inflame hatred ; neither of them ever forgave the other, and they parted as bitter and irreconcilable enemies. In a few months after this event, he received with undisguised satisfaction the tidings of her death, and his inveteracy against the world having been aggravated by the contemptuous treatment he had experienced from her titled relatives, he resolved if possible to make his second wife instrumental to his purposes of meditated vengeance, by marrying a fortune : for, in an age of general venality, corruption, and perfidy, he saw clearly that there was no power so effectual as that of wealth. An orphan daughter of a boroughreeve, become suddenly opulent by the death of her uncle, a Gloucestershire clothier,

attracted his attention ; and he had no sooner ascertained the extent of her riches, than he made her an offer of his hand. Short as had been their previous acquaintance, he had taken such unusual pains to ingratiate himself that he had already won her affections. On account of the recent death of his first wife, they were secretly married in a distant part of the county ; and this kind-hearted, simple-minded woman, ultimately becoming the careful and economical Lady Fitzmaurice to whom we have already introduced our readers, continued to love her husband, with a constancy that was proof against her own convictions of his unworthiness, and even against her knowledge of his conjugal infidelity, of his indifference to her person, and contempt of her meek submissive character.

Fortune now seemed to have lent herself to the furtherance of his ambitious and vindictive schemes. As the friend and representative of Sir Giles Hungerford of the Tor, he possessed station and influence ; by his wealth he procured himself to be made a magistrate ; and this combination conferred upon him a power which,

he determined to strengthen by every possible accessory before he began to display it. It has been observed that, by a benignant provision of nature, the more potent animals are generally innocuous, or at all events free from the venom and malignity which, in the smaller creatures, is neutralized by their feebleness :—but this rule did not apply to Sir Lionel. He had the courage and strength of the lion, the rapacity of the wolf, the craft of the fox, the remorselessness as well as the hypocrisy of the hyæna, the williness and the venom of the serpent. Unrestrained by principle of any sort, he yet avoided open violence and crime in the perpetration of his designs, because he considered them perfectly unnecessary. It appeared to him a gross mistake and error of calculation thus to commit himself, when the same object might be safely accomplished by subtlety. After having carefully considered the constitution of society, the laws by which it is governed, and the ruling passions of the multitude, it became his intimate conviction, and governing rule of conduct, that there was no enormity or outrage which

might not be committed with impunity by a judicious union of cunning and gold. He looked upon the laws as so many fetters, by which the common people were restrained from tearing one another to pieces, only that they might be reserved as ready-bound victims whenever their superiors required them to be offered up. If the King wanted to murder a wife or favourite of whom he had become tired, he knew that no innocence would protect them from the snares of the law, or shield them against those assassins in black gowns, who were as ready to spill blood, and as cheaply hired to do it, as the professed bravo. He determined to imitate the royal example; to found his power upon fear, and pervert the law to his own purposes of oppression; while he sat at his ease, and looked safely down into the arena where his human victims were to be baited and torn to pieces, for the gratification of his caprice or vengeance.

Acting upon this principle, he acquired an habitual taste for the tortuous, the crafty, the disingenuous, for every thing that savoured of finesse, insidiousness, and chicanery.

Even where his point could be equally well gained by direct and obvious means, he preferred stratagem and manœuvre. These formed what he termed his studies of human nature. A vulgar ruffian could practise open violence ;—but to circumvent, to over-reach, to undermine ; to make your enemy first your dupe and then your victim ; and all without endangering yourself,—these were the strokes of Machiavellian policy in which he delighted, and which he considered as the evidences of a master-spirit.

But, subtle and powerful as he was, he felt that the vast designs he contemplated could not be effected without numerous agents, whom he forthwith proceeded to select. As the law was to be his great engine of oppression, he chose from among its followers one of those shrewd knaves who understood enough of his profession to avail himself of its chicanery, and was uncontrolled in its exercise by a single principle of honesty or honour. This wretch he domiciliated in his house as his legal jackal, and by giving him a share of the plunder, he doubted not that he should be enabled to run

down whatever prey he should mark for destruction. For this species of oppression the æra was singularly favourable. In a reign wherein many thousand criminals, exclusive of numerous political victims, perished by the hands of the executioner, it may be supposed that the penal statutes must have been sufficiently voluminous and severe.* They were, in fact, so sweeping in their sanguinary scope, and yet so loosely defined ; so vacillating, and often so diametrically opposed to one another, particularly on the subject of religion, that no man could be sure of escaping the prison's carnivorous jaws, more especially if he were unfortunate enough to have an unprincipled enemy, who sought his ruin. In support of his nefarious machinations, whenever they should be called into action, Sir Lionel took care to choose for the menials of his household, such desperadoes and renegades

* The prisoners for debt and crime are stated in an Act of Parliament to be upwards of sixty thousand persons ; and Hume, upon the authority of Harrison, informs us that seventy-two thousand criminals were executed during the reign of Henry VIII. for theft and robbery. Hollinshead, with more probability, states the number to have been twenty-two thousand.

does as would prove staunch rufflers in a brawl, or equally intrepid swearers in a court of justice. Of this lawless band, who always went armed, that they might be ready to inflict or resist violence, the command was given to Captain Basset, whose name has already been slightly mentioned. When intoxicated, to which he had an habitual tendency that had almost become constitutional, the captain was ready for any enterprize, however savage and desperate; a quality which had procured him his present appointment;—but he was not naturally vicious. Remorse for the misdeeds of intoxication always assailed him when sober; to drive away so unpleasant a visitant he had fresh recourse to the bottle, which commonly terminated in some new act of violence; so that he passed his brawling life in an alternation of error and repentance, in which, however, the former became gradually stronger, while the latter moods grew weaker in their influence, and shorter in their continuance.

In addition to these instruments of his hostile purposes, Sir Lionel had formed darker and

more impious alliances, to which we shall advert when the consequences of his unholy conjurations became developed. "Flectere si neque Superos, Acheronta movebo," seems to have been his motto in these, his sacrilegious dealings. "If I cannot be reverenced as a deity, I swear that I will be feared as a daemon," said Sir Lionel to himself, as he marked the completion of his preliminary arrangements; and amply and awfully did he perform his tremendous vow.

It might be now said, that, in the confidence of his power and resources, he was about to declare war against mankind; but he resolved to avenge his individual wrongs before he gratified his general hatred. His father, whom he considered as his first enemy, had been already sufficiently humbled for his present purposes; although he still contemplated him with an insatiable hatred: the schoolmaster, his second oppressor, was next marked for vengeance. No spider, when it sits in its concealed den swelling with venom, ever gloated with greater delight over the ineffectual struggles of the victim which it has entangled, than did Sir Lionel

contemplate the terrified efforts of the pedagogue; around whom he had coiled a legal net, from which he could only extricate himself by leaving his character and his fortune behind, and flying from the country as a friendless outcast and a beggar. Now it was that he dived into his festering heart for the seeds of revenge, which he had so carefully treasured up, even from his boyish days. His memory sat brooding upon the past till it had hatched every dormant injury into new life, and every grievance or insult, thus resuscitated, was tracked back to its author with a feeling of renovated rancour. Like an unseen blood-hound, he tracked the course of his former school-fellows who had ever offended him; and if they still dwelt within the reach of his machinations, they were sure to be visited by some unexpected calumny or disaster; of which they could neither guess the cause nor discover the author. One by one as his former enemies fell before him, his bosom swelled with a malicious satisfaction, while his success emboldened him, now that he had gratified his long cherished rancour against individuals, to bid a

more general defiance to that society by which he considered himself to have been aggrieved and wronged.

Judging of others by his own feelings, he conceived that he could not more effectually annoy his neighbours, than by exciting their envy at his superior magnificence. It delighted him to fill them with wonder as well as jealousy ; to effect which double object, no contrivance, no expense was spared. His household state could not, indeed, be said to rival that of Cardinal Wolsey, who numbered eight hundred persons in his regal establishment ; but it was scarcely less princely when compared with that of his noble neighbours. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than the title of the King of the Hill bestowed upon him by the common people, for he affected a mimic sort of royalty in all his actions. Music played whenever he entered and quitted an apartment, in order, as he said, that he might regalize his imagination. Dress, it has been well observed, augments consciousness ;—his was kingly ;—he exacted a profound homage from all who approached him ; nor did

he even issue a warrant for killing a buck, without imitating the royal style, and giving it in due form, under his seal and sign manual. Seated in his magistrate's chair, he was a monarch on his throne; ay, and a stern one too; more dreaded and trembled at than many a crowned despot. Exquisite wines and the most costly rarities he delighted to place before his guests, but he was himself no epicure; his mind was so absorbed in ministering to his evil passions, that he cared little about the gratifications of the body. Although he had no enjoyment of these delicacies, however, his own table was always sumptuously served; and he even contrived to extract a mortal pleasure from indulgences to which he was sensually indifferent, by viewing them as provocatives to the envy and hatred of all those who should witness his superior state and grandeur.

Under the full legal powers with which Sir Giles had so incautiously invested him, he sold all the family possessions not situated in Somersetshire, for the purpose of aggrandizing the estate in the neighbourhood of the Tor House,

which he quickly began to consider as his own; for he never doubted that the rightful owner would perish in the French wars; and as to the boy Cecil,—he was in his power; merely contemptible so long as he did not assert his claims, and easily disposed of when he should. All those who possessed contiguous property, and whose estates were wanted for the enlargement of his own, were soon destined to feel his power if they presumed to oppose it. From that moment he marked them for destruction. When two or three had fallen victims to his diabolical machinations, others became intimidated, and were glad to sell their lands much beneath their value, and quit a neighbourhood which was overshadowed and empoisoned by this human Upas. Hopeless as it might be to contend with a man who defied heaven, appeared to be supported by all the evil ones of earth, and had the reputation of being allied to the powers of hell, there were still some spirits too generous and brave to submit tamely to such a monstrous, such an intolerable oppression. Indignant at the very thought of being

thus shouldered from their ancestral seats by an illegitimate upstart, they boldly threw down the gauntlet, and defied his enmity. That barbarous state of society, in which noblemen and gentlemen called upon their vassals to attend them in their private feuds, still continuing to exist in some of the remoter counties, they went with a train of armed followers to the sessions, or other public meetings, where they were likely to encounter Sir Lionel ; but he either outnumbered them by a still more numerous and formidable band, or gave such information of their violent proceedings as placed himself in a favourable light, and drew down upon his opponents some severe prohibition from the King, or perhaps occasioned them to be summoned to London.

These vain endeavours to extricate themselves from his deadly grasp, only aggravated their fate. Coil by coil, snare by snare, net by net, he gradually wound his toils around them, and so beleaguered them with traps and pitfalls upon every side, that they could not possibly escape him. The Star Chamber, the Ecclesiastical Courts,

the Legatine Court, the Court of Chancery,—corruption, perjury, and all the endless chicaneries of the law were put in requisition against them,—until at last, despairing of other justice or redress, they were tempted to defy him to single combat. This was an alternative to which he was always delighted to reduce them. An utter stranger to fear, confident in his personal vigour and skill as a swordsman, it was quite consistent with his general system of caution and safety that the difference should be brought to this issue; for he always reckoned upon dispatching his adversary, and knew that no cognisance would ever be taken of a death thus inflicted, especially where he was the party challenged, not the original violator of the peace. Lord Dawbeney was the first thus doomed to be his victim. Sir Lionel passed his sword through his heart, and, deliberately wiping it with the skirt of his adversary's garment as he lay dead before him, returned it to the scabbard, drew back his nostrils with a complacent expression, looked down upon the body with half-shut eyes, and contemptuously exclaimed—

" Thus ends the lawsuit with my Lord Dawbeney ! "

Eager to avenge their friend and neighbour, Sir Launcelot Wallop, and the younger son of Sir Hugh Trevor, successively called him to the field ; but the dauntless and unconquerable Sir Lionel seemed, whenever he fought, to borrow the lance of death ; and the generous champions who were to have exacted retribution for the fate of Lord Dawbeney, doomed to feel the same fatal sword thrilling through their bodies, were remorselessly sent to join him in the grave.

From this moment his reputation for sorcery and enchantment, and the belief that he was under the protection of demons, became so firmly established, that few had the temerity to oppose him either by the law or the sword, and the King of the Hill, as he cast his eyes over the country in one direction, surveyed little that did not constitute a portion of his own wide-spread domain. There was one rival, however, who not only possessed manors and lands interspersed among his property, which he had hitherto been unable to wrest from him by all his

manœuvres, but whose buildings and possessions, sweeping along the champain country in an opposite direction, almost as far as the eye could reach, threw his own into a comparative insignificance. This was the mitred Sovereign of the Valley, as he was termed in opposition to Sir Lionel, the Abbot of Glastonbury, a peer of parliament, and one who, from a sense of duty and justice, had uniformly opposed the arrogant encroachments of the King of the Hill. As lowly and humble in heart as he was exalted and powerful in station, this pious and venerable man, considering himself the mere custodian of the abbey-property, refused to alienate a single acre of its lands; while as the father of his flock, and the protector of the neighbourhood from oppression, he had done his utmost to defeat Sir Lionel's ambitious and unjust designs. Hence the rancorous animosity with which he was contemplated by the latter, whom, in return, the Abbot viewed with a devout abhorrence, not only on account of his misdeeds, but from his intimate persuasion that he had formed some unholy alliance with the

powers of darkness. That a man of learning and enlightened mind should hastily entertain such an opinion, may appear strange to modern readers ; but it should be recollected that at this æra the great enemy of mankind was so much more active than at present, and even so little scrupulous of exposing himself to public view, that the Lord Dacre hesitated not to attribute his disaster in Scotland to the presence of this terrific opponent ; a fact which the Earl of Surrey communicated to Cardinal Wolsey in his official dispatch, supporting it with the testimony of the whole company engaged.* If the pious Abbot entertained the opinion we have mentioned, before the startling occurrences in the Chapel of Saint Mary, related in our last chapter, it may easily be imagined that his previous suspicions were now converted into certainties; and that his aversion increased with

* "I dare not write the wonders that my Lord Dacre and all his company doo saye they sawe that night vj tymys, of spirits and ferefull sights, and unyversally all their company saye playnely, the Devill was that nyght amonst them vj tymys."

See Ellis's Original Letters, vol. I. p. 217.

this new and irrefragable proof of his adversary's unhallowed alliances.

That our readers may understand the characters of the other leading personages in the Tor House, within whose walls we have conducted them, we must, before we proceed with our narrative, say a few words upon Dr. Wrench, and his quondam pupil Cecil Hungerford. The former, who had originally entered college as a sizer, and had taken his degrees with a prodigious reputation for scholarship, was one of those pedants, pedagogues, and commentators, who, among his brother-moles of literature, had acquired a name by his superior talent at grubbing his way in the dark, and the indefatigable industry with which he ferreted under ground, and after all turned up nothing but rubbish. On the strength of some elaborate Latin annotations upon points of grammar, or trivial various readings in the classics, he had been dubbed in some of their Encomia the Renchius noster, and the Renchius eruditissimus, whose fame was to descend to poste-

rity under the sanction of these college barbarians. His pursuits were at least worthy of this Gothic appellation. The rat that burrows beneath St. Paul's Cathedral would be as competent to form an opinion of its architectural beauties, as would this mere grub and book-worm have been enabled to take an enlarged and comprehensive view of literature. With an extensive knowledge of words and a profound ignorance of things; he considered language not as a means, but as an end which of itself sufficed for all. Wisdom, according to his notions, was an extensive acquaintance with certain arbitrary sounds; every thing enclosed in a Latin shrine became a deity at once; and if its prosody were but correct, the stupidest nonsense verse that ever school-boy and Gradus combined to hammer together in this language, outweighed the sublimest sentiments that could be embodied in an English stanza. Even of Latin, however, he knew nothing but the language, and the valuable classics which had been so lately discovered in Italy, excited in him no

further interest, than as they helped to decide the root of some obsolete word, or settle some contested point of grammar.

This learned blockhead had the misfortune to be diminutive and deformed, and thinking himself maltreated by nature, while he viewed his more favoured fellow-creatures with envy, his mind became as thwart and perverse as his figure. Rendered still more spleenful and waspish by the exacerbation of approaching age, he found no vent for his malice except in tormenting his pupils, a privilege which the habits of that semi-barbarous age warranted him to exercise without mercy. It may seem strange that such a tyrannous and malignant creature should crouch down, and so control his nature as to fawn upon Sir Lionel with the most implicit and abject submission; and it will appear still more strange to modern nations, when we state the reason of his thus prostrating himself. His scholastic ignorance had made him a profound believer in the philosopher's stone, the elixir vitae, and all the mysteries of the occult

philosophy; and an interview with Cornelius Agrippa, when that celebrated magician visited England, had obstinately confirmed him in his superstition. Not only had he beheld his celebrated attendant spirit, in the shape of a black dog, with necromantic inscriptions upon its collar; not only had he seen the archimago with this assistance perform a variety of magical and astrological evolutions; but he had received from this modern Alchymazar a learned work by the Abbot Tritheimus entitled the Great Phoenix, wherein it was clearly proved that the real elixir vitae would not only bestow rejuvenescence upon its fortunate possessor, but enable him to choose any form of manly beauty in which to pass his new life. The idea of recovering his youth, and of being indemnified for all the mortifications of his deformity by becoming as remarkable for symmetry and comeliness as he now was for an opposite exterior, (a change in the possibility of which he was the more disposed to confide, because the book in question was written in Latin,) had taken such

firm possession of his mind, that it excluded every other pursuit; and occupied his thoughts by night and by day.

With his usual intuition into character, Sir Lionel had discovered this foible, and by pretending to a deep knowledge of alchemy, and flattering the poor crooked pedant with hopes of attaining the grand elixir, he had converted him into his slave, ready to execute all his purposes, in the hope of this great final reward. Various circumstances and ocular observations having impressed the doctor with a decided conviction that his patron maintained a secret correspondence with the powers of darkness, he had the greater confidence in his success, and devoted himself the more blindly to his designs. In point of fact, Sir Lionel had once wasted a few pounds in pursuit of the philosopher's stone; but having obtained a knowledge of the terms of the black art, and a slight insight into chemistry, he went no further: his natural shrewdness subdued his cupidity, and he abandoned delusions for realities. The crucibles, alembics, and retorts, by means of which he

was to aggrandize himself, were transferred to his own mind, and the materials upon which he was to operate were the fears and follies, the vices and passions of his fellow-creatures. For the purpose, however, of duping the doctor, whose delusion he keenly enjoyed, he kept up his laboratory and its apparatus, occasionally enrolling himself of the crew of "blind buzzards that blow at the coal," and making experiments to advance the *menstruum*, and prepare the *magisterium*, whenever the moon and planets were in favourable conjunction for such mystical operations.

After recording the hard, cruel character, and narrow or perverted minds of the gaolers, it makes the heart bleed, and the pen recoil, to draw the portrait of their victim. It is like the painful delineation that paints the dove bleeding in the talons of the vulture, or the gentle lamb palpitating beneath the fangs of the wolf. Cecil Hungerford was one of those delicate, fragile, and almost ethereal forms, which at once lead you to expect a correspondent gentleness and refinement of mind. As a youth, he had

the look of an angel, and the *mens divinior* was not unworthy of its shrine. Of the finest porcelain that nature manufactures, his fair, transparent skin revealed every minute branching of the blue veins beneath it; enlarged intellect was legible in his high forehead and finely expanded brow; while the love with which his heart was filled expanded itself over his mild and amiable countenance. A frame thus slightly organized, united to a tremulously sensitive mind, needed the tenderest care to preserve that exquisite adaptation which could alone enable them to develope their respective faculties without encroaching upon one another, and deranging the fine mechanism of the whole. So far from his experiencing any such fostering treatment, he had been exposed, even from his early days, to the most diabolical practices and machinations, pointedly directed against the wholesome expansion of his intellects, and exercised with a refinement of art and cruelty that might well have unsettled a mind of tougher fibre. To meuring end of his life he had

When the devils of ambition began to unfold

themselves in the bosom of Sir Lionel, he contemplated this unfortunate youth with an evil eye, as the sole bar to his hopes; but, as his established system of caution and safety forbade open violence, he pondered long and deeply how his nefarious designs might be best seconded by craft. A mind so acutely sensitive, faculties so tremulously poised, as Cecil's, appeared peculiarly liable to be thrown, by any violent shock, out of that perfect balance which constitutes sanity; and if he could either effect this object, or in any way stultify his intellectual powers, the plenitude of his imbecility would easily enable him to perpetuate that guardianship which was now to expire with the attainment of his twenty-first year; nor could a youth thus branded with insanity or idiocy be ever in a situation to marry, so as to cut him off from his issue, succession. No sooner had he conceived this atrocious design, than he rendered the agents with whom he had surrounded himself, and the chemical skill he had acquired in his pursuit of the philosopher's stone, subservient to its execution. Spectral

figures and optical illusions were displayed before the boy's bewildered eyes when he had been suddenly awakened in the dead of night. From the fineness of his general organization his ear was singularly susceptible, a quality which spontaneously undulated his melodious voice, better than could have been accomplished by the most careful tuition; but which at the same time occasioned him to be affected to a morbid excess of irritation, by any harsh or dissonant sounds. Of this tendency the most cruel advantage had been taken. Clanking chains, detonating powders, the blast of cracked trumpets, and other horrid clangours, frightening the silence of night, poured such agony into his ear, and terror into his soul, that his senses were generally stupified, and stupefied during the whole of the following day; and a continuance of similar inflictions, combined with the privation of sleep, soon threatened their total alienation.

It was in this state of bewilderment, when days of stupor succeeded to nights of maddening misery and horror, that Doctor Wrench was

engaged as his tutor; and, choosing to term him idle whenever he was exhausted, and stupid when he was aghast, proceeded to gratify his own malignity, and aggravate the poor boy's wretchedness, by endeavouring to flog him into tranquillity and acuteness. The result was precisely what Sir Lionel had anticipated: confused and tormented, the unfortunate Cecil became at times incapable of study, when he was taxed with imbecility and idiocy; or at other moments was goaded into such aberrations as would almost justify a charge of temporary lunacy. Naturally, however, his intellect was singularly quick and precocious, and occasionally burst through the clouds that overshadowed his mind like a brilliant gleam of sunshine through the mist and storm.

Notwithstanding these lucid intervals, he was formally declared by the Doctor to be idiotic, or at least so imbecile as to be incapable of instruction, and he accordingly resigned his tutorship. Sir Lionel took good care that this fact should be blazoned abroad; and having indemnified the Doctor by appointing him his private

secretary, he abandoned all further persecution and conspiracy against Cecil, not from compunction, but because, as it was now unnecessary, it would be a mistake, which in his estimation was always worse than a crime. To his ignorance too, and want of education, he looked forward as proofs that might be adduced whenever they should be required, in confirmation of his imbecility. Most happy was it for his victim, that he was upon this calculation abandoned to himself; for a longer exposure to such appalling cruelties, at once torturing the senses and bewildering the apprehension, would have infallibly terminated in a fixed and incurable madness. As it was, his mind slowly recovered its equilibrium, still indeed sufficiently disordered from the shocks it had received, to shrink with a morbid sensitiveness from all contact with fellow-creatures from whom he had encountered nothing but oppression; while his total want of instruction upon some of the commonest points of knowledge, might easily persuade a superficial observer that he was a natural simpleton;

His fine intellect, however, unassisted and unregulated as it was, continued to develope itself during this period, although in a manner which, from the eccentricity it displayed, favoured the general opinion of his fatuity. The overflowing love and affection which his own species seemed to have rejected, effused themselves the more abundantly upon nature and the brute creation. His white spaniel was his friend and inseparable companion; the earth was his mistress, upon whose beautiful features he would sit and gaze for hours, rapt in an intense delight, which few could comprehend, though many could abhor or pity it. The natural world he could admire and understand, but the moral one both puzzled and revolted him. When he considered the occupations of mankind, he saw that their great business was to delude, pillage, persecute, oppress, and destroy their fellow-creatures, while their great recreation was to extend the same practices to the beasts of the field. Of the former he openly declared his abhorrence; to field sports he professed an equal repugnance. He had no objection to

learn the military exercises as an amusement, or a means of defence against violence; but when they wanted him to tilt and fight with other youths of his own age, sports which he knew to have often ended in maiming or death, he resolutely declined, declaring that he dared not wantonly run the risk of defacing God's image. These flagrant heresies were universally attributed to mental imbecility and cowardice, and he was seldom spoken of, even by those who pitied and wished him well, otherwise than as "poor Cecil Hungerford, the craven and the idiot."

A circumstance occurred shortly before Dudley's arrival, which had deepened his melancholy into a morbid feeling of self-abasement, and increased that meeping love of solitude which Sir Lionel, in writing to his father, had stigmatized with the name of sullenness and stupor. To vary the dulness of her stately life, Miss Fitzmaurice, in the absence of a more eligible vocalist, had occasionally sent for him to sing to her, or accompany her when she played on the virginals, an office for which he was ad-

mirably qualified by his fine voice and intuitive knowledge of music. A youth so susceptible as Cecil could hardly contemplate her sparkling beauty unmoved; she was the only female with whom he had opportunity to converse, the only being almost who had condescended to notice him, and the admiration with which he had always beheld her, unconsciously ripened into a warmer feeling of tenderness, as this intercourse, slight as it was, continued. Gratitude came to foster the latent passion. Captain Basset, who had been constituted a sort of keeper over him, and who generally accompanied him when he was allowed to pass the gates, was irritated by intoxication to order him into close confinement for some trivial or imaginary offence. Beatrice, who happened to be passing at the moment, not only rebuked him with such a petulant asperity as presently sobered him, but forbidding him at his peril to enforce his threat of imprisonment, bore off his rescued charge to accompany her in singing. Favours of any sort always deeply affected Cecil; this was too much for his sensibility; and, melting into tears when he ought to

have begun to sing, he let the music-book drop from his hand, and looking at Beatrice with an expression of respectful tenderness exclaimed—“ What a happiness would it be to me—what a change would it make in my miserable existence—if I might be permitted to love you!”

Beatrice, who considered this unpremeditated effusion of gratitude as a more formal declaration of attachment, and offer of his hand, than it was really meant to convey, instantly reddened deeply; the fire flashed from her eyes, and drawing herself up with an air of proud scorn, that positively disfigured her beauty, she indignantly replied—“ Love me, Sir!—he to whom I permit that honour must be neither a boy nor an idiot!” At these words she shut up the instrument, and walked haughtily out of the room, leaving Cecil completely overwhelmed with wretchedness and humiliation. From that moment she had never spoken to him or noticed him, and the almost broken-hearted youth seemed to find no consolation, except when he could escape from those who were appointed to watch him, and bury himself amid the wild

solitudes of the Mendip Hills, or in the dark loneliness and silence of Wokey Cave.

We shall mention only one other circumstance which had contributed to fill his mind with a darkness and doubt, that at times almost drove him to despair. The light of his reason had not been so obscured, but that from an observance of the beauty, order, and harmony of the external world, he was imbued with a deep sense of natural religion, whose chief elements were beneficence and love. These impressions were utterly at variance with the Book of Legends, a tissue of absurd fables, traditions and miracles, which had been put into his hands as a rule of faith and a guide of life; and when he frankly confessed to Father Barabas, who was the sole spiritual authority at the Tor House, his disbelief of such puerilities, he was fiercely denounced as a heretic, and threatened with infamy in this world, and eternal torments in the next. Terrified, but not convinced, he concealed his doubts, and again took refuge in seclusion and solitude, only to find that the incomprehensible darkness and mystery in which the present world had al-

ways been involved, was now extended to the next, and to feel with increased anguish that he was considered as an outcast from both. The beautiful temple of his mind was in fact in ruins, not such ruins, however, as are occasioned by the lapse of time or the progress of natural decay, but rather resembling the dilapidation of some new and perfect edifice, which a sudden convulsion of nature has shattered, and which the skill of the architect may speedily re-establish in all its pristine majesty and glory.

CHAPTER II.

Down stairs they helter-skelter fall,
Sow, constable, crones, rustics—all—
What witches' revel
Is this? and what is yonder sprite,
The cause of all their wild affright—
An imp or devil?

It will be recollectcd that on the morning of the day when the minstrels' feast was celebrated at the Tór House, Pierre had received instructions to set out at an early hour for Wells, in order to settle with Sib Fawcett of The Tables, and bring away his master's effects; a commission in which he found too much pleasure not to execute it with the most punctual alacrity. Among the various curiosities which Dudley's command of money had enabled him to purchase in France, and which were carefully bestowed in

his huge valise, was an automatical clock, of a construction which, at that period, had not been introduced into England. Fashioned according to the barbarous taste of the age, the dial-plate was supported by a grotesque monster squatted upon its haunches, in the style of those hideous figures that are frequently encountered in Gothic architecture; in order to increase its frightfulness of appearance, the mouth and eyes, the latter of which were formed of false diamonds, were made to open and shut with every vibration of the interior works, and at the expiration of every hour it started up erect, and struck the time with a large brass wand. This alarming piece of mechanism Dudley had wound up on his arrival at The Tables, in order to be sure that it had sustained no injury by its long journey, and having seen with great pleasure that it performed all its functions satisfactorily; he had left it in a recess of the wall when he departed for the Tor House. Shortly after he had quitted the premises, the unfortunate black sow, which was considered to be bewitched; found its way from the public room, where it

was a frequent eleemosynary visitant, up into the Horn Chamber. This expedition, however, was not so secretly accomplished, but that Dickon's eyes, which had the advantage of looking two or three ways at once, detected the trespass; and having provided himself with a stick, he proceeded forthwith to execute an unceremonious ejectment upon the intruder.

In the performance of this intention he darted rapidly into the room, but had no sooner arrived opposite to the demoniacal object we have described, than his progress was suddenly arrested, the stick fell from his hand, his hair bristled up, and his eyes, for the first time in his existence, became fixed in a central and straightforward stare, which continued for a few seconds, when he set up a discordant yell of terror, and rushed down the stairs much faster than he had ascended. Dissonant as the sound was, Sib Fawett instantly recognized the voice of her darling child, and hurried into the tap-room; where she found him surrounded by a host of guests and customers, all eagerly questioning him as to the cause of his outcries,

as well as of the alarm which was still broadly legible upon his panic-stricken countenance. As soon as the urchin could recover breath sufficient, he declared, although in an incoherent manner, that one of the devil's imps was sitting upon the wall of the Horn Chamber ; that he had seen him make faces and wink his eye at him, and then heard him chuckle and cackle in his throat with laughter ; and finally, that the bewitched sow was rubbing her shoulder against the wall right under him ! Some of the auditors affected to treat this combination of horrors with derision, declaring that the boy must have been mistaken altogether, or that the whole might have been the coinage of his brain, which he had been enabled to see, by his eyes having such a constant tendency to peep into his own head. This solution of the mystery was taken in prodigious dudgeon by Sib Fawcett, who indignantly rejected the imputation of his seeing further than other folks, and taking him upon her knee and fortifying his courage with a glass of cordial, she drew from him so circumstantial, and at the same time so appalling, an account

of the apparition, that the most incredulous began to look serious, and suddenly dropped the bantering tone in which they had first spoken.

Not an individual of the whole assemblage had hitherto offered to mount the stairs and use the evidence of his own eyes; although several had strenuously recommended Sib Fawcett to do so, offering to bet a noggin of ale that it would turn out to be nothing. The prudent hostess had much more serious misgivings upon the subject than she chose to avow; for notwithstanding all she had cautiously urged in justification of Sir Lionel's character, she fully shared the general opinion concerning him; and had no sooner learnt that Dudley was bound to The Tor House, which she looked upon as a sort of pandæmonium, than she thought it highly probable he might be carrying thither a supply of goblins and evil spirits. Should one of these have escaped, or have been left behind by mistake, than which nothing was more likely, the Horn Chamber would infallibly obtain the reputation of being haunted, unless the intruder were

quickly exorcised and ejected ; a process which, however expedient it might be, she had not the smallest inclination to perform in her own person. With the ready invention of fear, she declared that she had made a vow never to meddle again with that unlucky black sow up stairs, but that she would give any one a quart of ale who would take her staff and turn it out of the room. She held up the weapon and poured out the foaming reward, but both remained unclaimed. One of the company wanted to go up town, another down town, a third walked out of the room without observation, a fourth followed him under pretence of bringing him back, and three or four more actually declared that they were not thirsty ; when Sib spying the constable in the door-way, tendered him the staff, commanding him, in virtue of his office, to preserve the king's peace, and turn out the intruder, who for aught she knew to the contrary might be a thief come to rob the house.

" Mass ! Sib," answered the constable ; " if he rob the Tables to the validome of a dandy-prat, it's a clear case of assault and battery by

law ; and I, Matthew Mumps, as a constable of the hundred, am bound to interfere for preservation of the peace of the king. Marry, I know my duty, and if such were the case, I would quickly unroost the paltry puckfist, pummel him with my battoon, and lodge him in the little-ease to feast upon peas and beans till the sessions. Cogswounds ! neighbour, I would make him smoke for it ; for it must be a stout ruffler, and one that will shed blood freely, that would oppose Matt Mumps with the king's staff in his hand, and the king's law on his side. But lookee, Sib Fawcett, this is no constable's matter unless you can prove peace broken or pence stolen : the felon is entitled to his benefit of clergy ; it is an affair of the spirituality to deal with spirits, and, by the mass, I'll not run risk of a *prælunire*, or perhaps be clapped into the Legantine Court by the one-eyed king in the scarlet cap* for exceeding my authority."

The swaggering manner inwhich this speech

* From a complaint in one of his eyes, Cardinal Wolsey always wore it covered with a flap, on which account his portraits are all drawn in profile.

was delivered did not deceive Sib, who exclaimed in an angry voice—" By my fackins ! I always knew thee for a right dunghill-cock in spite of thy loud crowing.—Hearken to him, my masters,—

He chides and he chatters—he prates and he patters,
He clitters and he clatters, he meddles and he snatters—
but when there's any chance of a cracked custard, the cowardly doddipate ever talks big and fights shy. Away, thou dawcock, thou bully-chicken ! here's Will Mattock shall take my crab-tree staff and purge my house of the black sow and all other trespassers, and be glad of a foaming quart for his pains, I warrant me."

Will, who had just entered the house, clapped his hands, cried "done!" seized the stick, chuckling to himself at the thought of the good bargain he had made, and was just proceeding in search of the black sow, when one of the company whispering him that he might expect other black customers besides the sow, and revealing to him what Dickon had seen, he dropped the stick and his under-jaw at the same moment, and stood still, gazing upon the wall

with a fixed and stolid stare. Somewhat indignant at this attempt to overreach him, by smuggling the devil into the *et-cætera* of an agreement, which pretended to have reference only to the black sow, he shook his head reproachfully at the hostess, exclaiming—“Dang 'ee, Sib, thee beest a deep one, but thee casten't chouse Will Mattock; for an I get one of Beelzebub's horns in my stomach, it baint a quart of thy twopenny that will plaster the wound.”

Luckily for the hostess, who began to be at her wit's end for a champion, the precentor of the church at this moment made his appearance, a pragmatical little personage, with a very clerical look, his robe being black with a budge collar, his head shaven, his beard square-cut, and his pickerdevant sprinkled with rose water. This formal figure she addressed, with much more than her usual courtesy, by the title of your reverence, making a brief statement of the premises, and soliciting his aid as he belonged to the church, and it was a spiritual affair, towards casting out her mysterious visitant.

The precentor, whose functions had never extended beyond instructing the boys of the choir in singing, was not less gratified by the title bestowed upon him, than by his assistance being required in a clerical matter of this importance, and he accordingly proffered his services with an air of pompous condescension; at the same time he declared his belief that the hobgoblin was neither more nor less than an owl, a monkey, or some animal belonging to the gentleman who had recently quitted the Horn Chamber, a supposition that seemed the more probable when it was recollect'd that he had recently arrived from abroad; and he angrily taunted his auditors for their proneness to superstition and credulity, which he pronounced to be the besetting sin of that part of Somersetshire. However, as he admitted that devils were indisputably abroad, and that no place was more likely to become their haunt than a public-house, he confessed that it would be right to assail the object in question with the spiritual arm, which he took upon himself to do; appealing to the company for protecting him with the arm of

flesh, should it prove, as he expected, some strange and perhaps savage animal.

In pursuance of this arrangement he drew from beneath his robe a large antiphoner, or book of anthems, with the music noted, inquiring whether any of them could read priek-song, and accompany him in the "Domine, exaudi," or the "Deus, in cajus manu," or the "Ostende nobis?" Finding that none of the party could undertake thus far, he expressed his wonder where they had been born and bred, and turned to the music of the paternoster, in which they all professed an ability to join him. He then desired them to provide themselves with such weapons and staves as were at hand, and placing himself at their head with his open book, began to ascend the stairs, followed by a collection which, by fresh arrivals from without, had now become a little mob of armed rustics. "Lackaday!" cried Sib Fawcett, as she marked the formal nature of these preparations, "here's a coit and a to-do about ne worse a hob-goblin, I warrant me, than a stray owl, which I would chuck out of window myself, but that

I cannot quit my Dickon, who still trembles and quakes like a furmenty pudding; wouldn't like a drop of dill-water, my darling, or a mouthful of guiddany?"

"No, mother, no," replied the urchin with a distasteful look as if he nauseated the very idea of eating—"I feel so queasy and qualmish that I'm sure I couldn't fancy any thing but a bowl of whortle-berries and clouted cream."

"And that thou shall have, my poppet, in a twinkling, even though I robbed the cheese-press." While she was proceeding upon this errand, the precentor, followed by his posse, had gained the door of the Horn Chamber, where he halted, took out a pitch-pipe, and having sounded a note, and bidden them observe that it was B flat, he held up the antiphoner with his left hand, pro bono publico, and marking the time by raising and lowering the other, while he ducked his head in accordance, as he had been accustomed to do when instructing the young choristers, he marched into the room.

Relying on the support of the main body, and keeping his eye glued to his book for fear

of encountering the sight of the demon, the leader of the band preserved his courage much better than his immediate followers, who no sooner gained a glimpse of the monster gaping, winking, and chuckling, as we have described, with the sinister and ominous black sow entrenched beneath it, and looking very suspiciously at the assemblage, than, exhibiting various manifestations of dismay, they prepared for absconding from the apartment. They who were behind, curious to know the meaning of this agitation, not only prevented retreat by blocking up the narrow door-way, but gradually forced the foremost nearer and nearer to the appalling figure; while the exorcist, who had yet seen nothing, though he had a shrewd suspicion that all was not right, sang louder than ever, an act of devotion in which he was utterly unsupported by the rest of the party. Immediately behind him stood Will Mattock, who finding it impossible to escape, and rendered desperate by his terror, put his left arm round the singer, so as to convert him into a sort of shield, and, raising his bludgeon, was about to

inflict a furious blow upon the monster; when its jaws and eyes opened wider than ever, it stood up erect, and began to strike the hour! At this appalling sound, which the fears of the auditors converted into a shrill trumpet of defiance, a panic terror took instant possession of their hearts; the precentor, who now gained a peep of the crowing demon, uttered a yell which was received as the signal for general flight, and the standers outside the door, being thrown down in the torrent, the whole collected mass rolled over one another down the stairs. Of this favourable opportunity the black sow, who had considered the hostile array as marshalled against herself, took advantage to commence a precipitate retreat over the bodies of her prostrate assailants, which she had only half accomplished, when Pincher the dog turned her back; so that, before she finally got away, she had trampled two or three times over the fallen, impressing them with the conviction that a whole legion of devils were dancing the hay upon their flesh, and proportionably aggravating their terror and their outcries: while

Sib Fawcett, attracted by the clamour, entered the public room just in time to see her darling Dickon sprawling in a puddle of clouted cream, his prostration having been the last piece of mischief perpetrated by the unlucky black sow, before she made her final escape into the road.

The hostess and her disordered family had presently the whole of the haunted house to themselves, and would probably have followed the common example by abandoning the premises, but that some of the fugitives, having encountered Father Barnabas, and related to him the whole of the mysterious occurrence, had prevailed upon him to tender his assistance in dispossessing the Tables of its diabolical inmate. The monk, who was a very different character from friar Frank, and who, from the description of the monster and his properties, had probably formed a shrewd suspicion of its real nature, immediately attributed the failure to their employment of the precentor, whom he stigmatized with arrogance and presumption for undertaking a holy office to which his powers were inadequate, and which was exclusively appropriated

to his superiors. Bidding them fetch him a stout branch of witch-elm, he desired them to be of good courage, for he would presently lay the intruder in the Red Sea, or deprive him of life and motion, by a single touch of his holy wand. While some dispersed themselves to procure a bough of the holy tree, which had the valuable property of indicating witches and expelling demons, they quickly circulated through the village the miraculous exploit which was about to be performed, so that Father Barnabas had in a short while a more numerous assemblage at his heels than had been collected by the precentor, although it was observable that there was hardly an individual of the former adventurers, with the exception of Will Mattock, who had courage enough to hazard a second experiment.

Having tied the bough of witch-elm into the shape of a cross, the father proceeded boldly to the scene of action, followed by an eager and agitated retinue, who kept at a respectful distance when he entered the haunted room, in order that they might have a command of the

door-way, and all start fair in case of need. For this, however, there proved to be no necessity. Reciting the Latin prayers provided for exorcism, the monk advanced to the monster, and commanding it in English to fall down and expire before the holy symbol, gave it a push with the bough, which, as he had probably anticipated, made it fall back against the wall, and by disturbing the equilibrium, stopped the works from going. The mouth and eyes remained permanently shut, and the ticking or chuckling in the throat, which had excited so much terror, was no longer heard. At this welcome occurrence the whole assemblage set up a shout of triumph, some cried out,—“a miracle! a miracle!” others ran down stairs to spread the joyful tidings, while Will Mattock, lifting his bludgeon, and exclaiming—“Dang’ee, foul tuoad! thee madest my heart quop wi’ thy dom’d crowing, but now thee beest dead I’ll ha’ a crack at thy ugly jaws,”—was about to let fall a blow which would have effectually silenced its voice for ever, when the monk interfered and forbade him to touch it, declaring that the consequences

might be fatal, as he was a secular and unauthorised assailant, and pronouncing that the defunct ought to be forthwith deposited in a box and buried. To this proposition all parties assented, suggesting that the proper place of interment would be beneath the witch-elm from which the bough had been taken. Feasible and consistent as this recommendation appeared, it was opposed by the monk, who decided the proper burial-place to be beneath the miraculous walnut-tree, at the north of Saint Joseph's chapel, in the abbey church-yard; observing, that as he, Father Barnabas, had been the happy instrument chosen for its destruction, the least they could do was to bury it beneath the tree in question, which, as all the world knew, never budded before the Feast of St. Barnabas, on the 11th of June.*

* This tree, as well as the miraculous thorn, (which was supposed to have been brought from Palestine by some of the pilgrims,) was visited as sacred by all ranks of people; and even so late as the time of King James, that monarch, as well as his ministers and nobility, paid large sums for sprigs of them, which were preserved as holy reliques.

Although it is more than probable that the worthy father was influenced to this advice by the prospect of disinterring a piece of mechanism, which he knew to be valuable in itself, and which his present experience convinced him might be rendered highly available as an instrument for deluding the populace; yet the ostensible reasons he had assigned were so plausible and cogent, that his auditors instantly admitted their validity. A box was forthwith procured, in which the defunct demon was carefully deposited by the hands of his conqueror; and Will Mattock being appointed to carry the coffin, they prepared to depart in a sort of procession for the abbey church-yard. Sib Fawcett, however, before they quitted her premises, presented herself with a mug in her hand, and, dropping a low curtsey to Father Barnabas, assured him he was quite welcome to the quart of ale which he had fairly won, by exorcising her house; expressing a hope, at the same time, that his reverence would not be offended, since times were hard, and hops and malt wickedly dear, if she requested him to

throw in a small additional boon in return for so much good liquor. Being encouraged to specify its nature, she implored him to uncurse the black sow, declaring that Dickon had got an ugly bump on the head, in the last fall, besides spoiling a new fustian jacket with the clouted creain, and that she expected no peace in the house until the anathematized animal was restored to the favour of the church, and constituted a fitting neighbour for a Christian family. Father Barnabas promised to take the case into consideration the next time he passed through Wells; and having, with the assistance of Will Mattock, dispatched the ale that he had so laudably earned, they set forward upon their expedition, and interred the box and its contents, with all due mālisons, under the miraculous walnut-tree, every one of whose branches was thought to possess a sovereign power in expelling, laying, and quelling malignant spirits of all sorts.

On the morning after this occurrence, Will Mattock, and some other of his rustic associates in this exploit, were assembled at the Tables to

talk it over, when they beheld Pierre trot up to the door with a face which preserved its imperturbable expression of good humour, although the unusual heat of the weather had imparted fretful and impatient looks to every other wayfarer that had passed the door.

“*Allerte! allerte! allerte!* disoit père Gre-goire,” shouted the light-hearted Gaul; and the hostess had no sooner presented herself to demand an explanation of these unintelligible sounds, than he declared that he came for four things,—to drink a pint of ale—to pay the reckoning—to take away the valise—and to pack up the little devil, which was the name that he familiarly bestowed upon the clock. The brutal Will Mattock, who felt as instinctive an antipathy to a Frenchman as a bull-dog does to the animal whence it derives its name, and who imagined that his animosity might be safely gratified now that the protecting demon was laid beneath the holy walnut-tree, started furiously up at these words, bidding his comrades take to their clubs, and knock the foreign Belzebub from his horse. Scandalized at the nonchalance

with which the unconscious Pierre had asked for his little devil, as if it were his regular travelling companion, the rustics grasped their staves, and followed Will Mattock, who, in his constant readiness for a brawl, had already aimed a blow, which, luckily for its object, fell short, and alighted upon the horse's shoulder. The spirited animal, which was one of Sir Lionel's stud, started off with a velocity that very nearly dismounted its rider; but as Pierre, who was by no means deficient in courage, and was provided with a stout riding-stick, was really anxious to chastise his ferocious assailant, he at length succeeded in again turning his head towards the public house. No sooner, however, had he come within reach of missiles, than he was saluted with a shower of stones, some of which again striking the horse, occasioned it to stop and curvet in spite of his most appealing exclamations of "*Eh, par example! Comment donc?*" and "*Attends! attends!*" At length, the irritated animal, taking the bit between its teeth, set off full gallop towards its home. Pierre kept his seat manfully, but his

hat was blown off in the scuffle, and the natives were not a little astounded at the sight of a flying apparition, his rings bobbing in his ears, his long hair streaming upon the wind, his face crimsoned with heat, yet nodding to them with a comical smirk as he scudded past, and singing at the very top of his voice, "*Hanneton, vole, vole, vole!*"

Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice had already been apprised by certain vague rumours, that Dudley's clock had been carried off by a fanatical mob, though he had not yet learnt the particulars of its fate. Pierre's hasty return, and his relation of the assault which had prevented the execution of his commission, incensed the haughty knight to the utmost degree. It was his pride, his delight, to have it thought that the inhabitants of the whole district in which he resided trembled at the very mention of his name, an opinion which he had particular reasons for wishing to impress upon Dudley. An indignity thus publicly offered to his guest's servant, he felt as a personal insult to himself, and as Will Mattock was the only offender whom Pierre could

individualize by name, a warrant was instantly issued for his apprehension, the officers, however, being instructed to bring with them all whom they should find in his company, or ascertain to have been implicated in his delinquency. These orders were promptly executed, and in no longer time than was necessary for their conveyance to The Tor House, notice was given that the culprits were waiting in the Hall of Justice, and Dudley was invited to be present at their examination.

The paraphernalia of this room, with its appalling emblems and frightful garniture, have already been described. Well calculated as they were to strike terror into the beholders, they appeared to be by no means so formidable as the figure of Sir Lionel himself, seated in his magisterial chair. A flowing robe, edged with minever, invested his large figure : on his head was a black velvet cap, resembling those in which Henry the Eighth is usually drawn, a white ostrich feather being fastened with a diamond loop in its front, so as to run along the brim, and fall down on one side ; his left arm rested upon the

hilt of that formidable sword which had proved fatal to all his opponents ; his chin reposed upon his right hand in such a manner, that the rings upon his finger were seen to sparkle and blaze in the midst of his dark flowing beard ; against the back of his chair was placed the long wand, to which the public belief attributed his supernatural power ; and beneath him was seated the little deformed doctor, who was vehemently suspected of being a species of familiar attendant upon the master-magician. Such an awe-striking figure, contemplated under these impressions, and known moreover to be a stern dispenser of justice in his magisterial capacity, would have been sufficiently overwhelming to most offenders, without that haughty demeanour, and language of fierce contemptuous abuse, which he invariably applied to all those who were brought up before him.

But Will Mattock's native sturdiness was now aggravated into a dogged, sullen, scottish inflexibility, by the aid of Sib Fawcett's ale ; he had been boasting as he came along, that he was neither to be frightened by a bugaboo, nor a

raw-head-and-bloody-bones, and that if the King of the Hill thought to browbeat him into a confession; he would find he had got the wrong sow by the ear. Nor was this altogether pot-valour, for he confidently reckoned that Sir Lionel, deprived of the demon whom they had laid by the heels under the walnut tree, was no more formidable than an old witch without her broom-stick and black cat; so that he came to the Tor House fully prepared to act up to every promise that he had made upon the journey.

"How now, thou draff-sacked, ale-swilling bumpkin!" exclaimed Sir Lionel in a loud and stern voice, "wert thou the leader of the thievish ribalds concerned in the robbery at Sib Fawcett's?"

"Nay, nay, your worship, that'n were never a robbery, I tell 'ee, and thee casten't prove it one, tho' thee wast to argufy wi' me till zupper-time."

"What! argue with thee, thou wielder of the spade and shovel! thou rain-beaten, dust-defiled, storm-pelted offspring of the ditch and dunghill! tell me at once, tell me I say, thou

boorish beast, where hast thou hidden the horologe?"

This word, which was the usual term then applied to a clock or watch, seemed at first to puzzle Will's apprehensions, which were never very acute, but he at length exclaimed—"Coga-wounds! I' se lay any man a red herring he do mean the little squat devil that puckered me all over wi' his dom'd crowing. What, thee wants un, dost thee, Sir Lionel?"

"Ay, saucy fellow, we do; so confess instantly."

At these words, Will struck his right hand upon his thigh with a loud smack, at the same time ejaculating with a clownish laugh—"Ho, ho! dang'd if I didn't say so! I knew thee casten't do without un, and I wunna tell'ee where he be."—

Indignant at being thus publicly defied, Sir Lionel's eyes flashed, his nostrils dilated, his long black beard undulated up and down, and he instinctively grasped the scabbard of his sword with one hand, and the hilt with the other; but the unflinching rustic, nothing daunted by

this movement, continued—"It's na use, it's na use, I tell 'ee, Sir Lionel ; Ise got a sprig o' witch-elm under my jacket, and vor all they long sword, thee casten't hurt a hair o' my head."

"Miserable wretch!" cried Sir Lionel, starting upon his feet, and erecting his commanding figure to its full height—"then thy doom is sealed, and thy last moment is come, for I will summon ten thousand devils that shall tear thee piecemeal with their red hot pincers, or plunge with thee into hissing gulphs of everlasting fire!"—At these words he seized the wand at the back of his chair, describing mysterious circles with it in the air, and at the same time stamping violently with his right foot, he cried aloud—"What ho ! what ho ! Beelzebub, Satan, Belial, Ashtaroth, Abaddon, Asmodeus!—Dies, mies, jesquet, benedoeft, douvima, enilemaus."*

From the moment that he commenced this evocation, the clown's eyes, which were intently fixed upon him, grew gradually larger and

* Such is the formula given by Agrippa for invoking devils.

larger ; his lips drew themselves back so as to disclose his clenched teeth, the perspiration started from his forehead, his shaggy hair stood on end, his complexion turned to a ghastly hue, and at length throwing himself suddenly upon his knees, and clapping his hands forcibly together, he ejaculated in a voice, rendered hoarse and broken by terror—"Sir Lionel ! Sir Lionel ! doan't 'ee for the Lord's sake—doan't 'ee for Christ Jesu's sake ! We buried 'un in a box under the Glastonbury tree—the walnut-tree—the holy walnut-tree. We did, indeed; so, Lord love 'ee, now, doan't 'ee call any of those devils—gentlemen, I mean ; doan't 'ee now, doan't 'ee !" trembling all over. He shut his eyes as he spoke, as if fearful of encountering a whole legion of infernals, and Sir Lionel, reversing his wand and describing various circles with it in the air, exclaimed—"Madman and stubborn beast ! thou wert just in time ; a moment longer and nothing could have saved thee. As thou hast confessed, I spare thy life ; but beware of me, for I rarely pardon once, and never a second time." Then turning to the constables who

were in attendance, he continued, “ Away with this reprieved caitiff, and let him be set in the stocks till supper-time ; when this is done, betake yourselves to the walnut-tree in the church-yard, dig up the buried box, and bear it carefully hither. Do ye hear me, ye varlets ? Begone, I say !”—After issuing these orders he cast a withering look upon the still kneeling rustic, and motioning his companions with his wand to stand aside and make way, a sign which they obeyed in silent fear and trembling, he stalked majestically through the midst of them, and quitted the hall.

CHAPTER III.

Married, not match'd, the faithful wife,
Doom'd to an uncongenial life
 Of state and terrors,
Tho' slighted, scorn'd, still fondly loves,
In secret mourns, but ne'er reproves
 Her husband's errors.

Anxious as he was to renew his conversation with the unfortunate Cecil, Dudley became every moment more and more convinced that there would be great difficulty in obtaining an interview. Any formal demand of this nature, with the avowed purpose of delivering to him the message from his deceased father, he had good reason to believe would be evaded, under plea of the youth's ill health, or peremptorily rejected without explanation; nay, he was possessed with a suspicion that their previous col-

loquy had been discovered, and that his movements were already watched; for, though he had repeatedly passed the tower by which he had ascended, he had invariably found a servant stationed at the entrance. From what he had observed of Sir Lionel's character, he had little reason to believe that he would scruple at the employment of open violence, either against himself or Cecil, if circumstances rendered it necessary; nor was he without a deep misgiving, both as to his means of obtaining information, and as to his defeating his opponents by the instrumentality of those mysterious and unhallowed agents, with whom he appeared to be associated. The occurrences in the abbey church, affording such vehement presumption of his having formed some supernatural alliance, had left a profound impression upon his mind; and he felt that he was in the hands of a man whose visible power, formidable as it was, was perhaps much less to be dreaded than his occult and guilty machinations with unseen agents. Still, however, he had not the smallest intention of flinching from that which he considered

a sacred duty, though he resolved to use every possible caution in the execution of his purpose.

In pursuance of this determination, he wandered about the old and spacious mansion, in the hope that he might discover some other outlet to the roof of the great hall, and thus be enabled to obtain access to the tower in which Cecil was confined ; but for a long time he only explored one obscure passage and room after another, without encountering any that promised to answer his purpose. At length, an open window inviting him to jump out upon the flat beneath, from which a roof rose sloping upwards on either side, he walked along it in the expectation of finding the top of the great hall, or getting a glimpse of the tower. While thus advancing, he was surprised to see smoke ascending from a trap-door at a little distance in front of him, and his astonishment increased when he perceived the top of a coloured flame, which rose to the aperture, and continued burning with a steady blaze. Under the impression that the building was on fire, he was about to

make a precipitate retreat and raise an alarm, when a sound of a voice within, which he instantly recognized to be Sir Lionel's, arrested his footsteps, and he resolved to creep upon his knees to the spot, so as to obtain a view of the chamber, and yet not be detected by the parties.

Upon getting near enough to look down, he discerned a small apartment, fitted up as a laboratory, with a furnace or stone in the centre, surrounded with retorts, alembics, rods, curcubits, cosssets, crucibles, and various strange figures, instruments, and implements, of whose names and purposes he was entirely ignorant. From a large brazen vessel on the stone arose the coloured flame which he had previously noticed, on one side of which was kneeling the deformed doctor, his eyes sparkling, and his eager countenance lighted up by the blaze, as he gazed upon it with an interest as intense as if he were penetrating the deepest arcana of fire, and looking into the very bowels of futurity. Opposite to him stood Sir Lionel, flourishing a long, hollow wand, from the extra-

mity of which he occasionally poured some liquid into the fire, which made it blaze fiercely up, when the deformed creature riveted his eyes to the brazen vessel with a still keener stare; and the hermetic artist drawing back his nostrils, looked down upon him with a sneer of derisive complacency, or rather with a sardonic grin, as if he enjoyed the ecstatic earnestness of his expectation. From time to time Sir Lionel was heard to pronounce the words *alkahest, magisterium, panacea, and elixir vita,* and talked of advancing to projection; after which he began to converse in a lower tone of voice, in which Dudley more than once caught the sound of his own name, combined with that of Cecil; but his utmost attention failed in discovering the scope or tendency of their colloquy, although he was doubly solicitous to do so when he found himself implicated in it. Despairing of reducing the few words that reached him to any coherent meaning, and apprehensive of being detected if he made a longer stay, he cautiously withdrew, and returning into the house, abandoned for the pre-

sent his meditated visit to the tower in which Cecil was confined.

Lost in reflection upon the scene he had just witnessed, he missed the stairs by which he had ascended, and winding down another narrow flight that conducted to the inner court, he stopped for a moment to gaze from an open loop-hole that admitted light to one of the landing-places. It looked down into the buttery-yard, where he beheld a scene of primitive industry and innocence that contrasted forcibly with the unhallowed doings of which he had been so recent a spectator. On account of the continued heat of the weather, Lady Fitzmaurice, surrounded by a party of her maids, had again taken her station beneath the chestnut-tree, the whole assemblage being busily employed in spinning, while the raven, from whose triple croaking she had formed such inauspicious omens of an approaching death in the family, was hopping round and eyeing them askance, as if he liked not their intrusion upon his domain. From the little that Dudley had seen of her ladyship, he had been involun-

tarily impressed in her favour, notwithstanding the homeliness of her manners, and the lamentable want of taste and fashion in her attire. The frank hospitality with which she had received him, her unassuming and even submissive deportment, and the melancholy expression of her countenance, which seemed to attest some secret grief, conspired to awaken his compassion, when he reflected upon the totally opposite character of the man to whom she was united, and the disrespectful, not to say contemptuous, treatment to which she was exposed. Beatrice was not present with the company beneath him, a circumstance at which he rather rejoiced ; for however appropriate it might seem that Dame Fitzmaurice should be thus occupied, he would have been scandalized had he seen the high-spirited and stately Miss Fitzmaurice degrading herself by any such servile employment.

Screened from observation by the branches of the chestnut-tree which spread themselves across the loop-hole, he continued gazing down upon the assemblage, when he saw her ladyship change her seat, at the same time exclaim-

ing—"Surely, wenches, the sun travels fast to-day, for this is the second time he has gained upon me, and made me move nearer the tree to save the shade. Prythee mind thy wheel, Alice, and peer not sideways over the wall, for the young groom-falconer was out this morning with his goss-hawk ere the laverock had sung her matin song, and it was not his whistle ye heard, but the blackbird in the moat-garden. See how your flax is knotted, and now you have pettishly snapped it. Fie upon you, for a peevish flirt-gillian! you may well blush.—What now, Grace, is your wheel again broken? was ever such a careless and unthrifty spinster! Nay, nay, good wench, look not so woe-begone, but take more heed. Welladay! though I have not a merry heart of my own, I would fain see none but happy faces around me; and, by my halidame! if we are to have a sad company, it shall not be a silent one, for I will sing ye the tail of a ballad, and she who fails to match it with another, let her not look for a new co-verchief for her head on St. Erkenwald's day."

And then in a low, and evidently untutored though not unmelodious voice, she sang—

‘ Ah Robin, jolly Robin !
Tell me how thy leman doth.
‘ My lady is unkind, perdie !
Alack, why is she so ?
‘ She loveth another better than me,
And still she will say no.—’

“ Take ye that, lasses, for a beginning; and prythee sigh no more, Joan, but be of good cheer, and troll us some merry ballad that may bring a smile upon our faces.” The maid thus addressed heaved a deep sigh, shook her head mournfully, and without taking her eyes from the wheel, began a ditty which was apparently congenial to her own feelings, though certainly not in accordance with the order she had received..

‘ Now Christ thee save, thou little foot-page,
Now Christ thee save and see !
Oh, tell me how does thy lady gay,
And what may thy tidings be ?
My lady sends thee a silken scarf
Bedewed with many a tear,
And bids thee sometimes think on her,
Who loved thee so dear.—

And here she sends thee a ring of gold,
The last boon thou may'st have,
And bids thee wear it for her sake,
When she is laid in grave.—

For ah ! her gentle heart is broke,
And in grave soon must she lie.'—

The voice of the songstress, which had been gradually becoming tremulous and broken, now ceased altogether, and her mistress looking in her face, exclaimed—"God's pity ! Joan, call you this a merry ballad ? Was ever such a fond fool ! Look at her, wenches, how her tears fall upon the distaff, and she sobs as if her own poor heart were indeed broken. Troth, for a silver penny, she has been crossed in love, and heaven knows I can feel for her if she has been unkindly treated ; but cheer up and be crank, my gentle Joan, and we will have a blythe ditty to drive away care.

"Come, my bonny Barbara, you have a bright eye and a merry mouth, and it ever likes me to hear your voice, so troll me the ballad that you love the best."

"Sooth, my lady," replied the lass, "I know not the whole on't; but what I may call to mind

of little Musgrave, you shall have and welcome.

‘ As it fell out on a high holiday,
As many be in the year,
When young men and maids together do go
Their masses and matins to hear,

Little Musgrave came to the church-door,
The priest was at the mass,
But he had more mind of the fine women
Than he had of our Lady’s grace.

And some of them were clad in green,
And others were clad in pall,
And then came in my Lord Barnard’s wife,
The fairest among them all.’”—

“ Holy St. Mary!” exclaimed Lady Fitzmaurice interrupting the songstress, “ what’s this I hear? is it so near noon-tide that the bell begins to toll at the abbey?”

“ Ay, marry, is it, my lady, for a mass of the Holy Ghost is to be sung at twelve, and that is the quarter’s chime-bell.”

“ Gramercy, then, I must to the kitchen, and care for the good serving of the dinner, or there will be a fume from Sir Lionel if aught goes wrong, and a visitor in the house; but mind

your wheels, good lasses; keep your feet and hands going, look not over the wall after the saucy grooms, and stir not till the bell warns to trencher."—With these orders she hastily quitted the place, and Dudley who was rather shocked to find how little time was allowed for attiring himself for dinner, lost not a moment in imitating her example, and hastening to his own apartment, smiling as he went at her ladyship's petty economy and humble occupation, when contrasted with Sir Lionel's lavish expenditure and ostentatious habits.

Having performed the duties of the toilet with more speed than he thought becoming in a matter of such importance, he made his way to the parlour, in which Sir Lionel and the doctor, having abandoned their alchemical studies, had arrived before him, and were conversing with Miss Fitzmaurice, who had arrayed herself in a fresh dress still more splendid than that in which he had first beheld her. He had hardly joined them and made his devoirs, when Lady Fitzmaurice, whose flushed face attested the activity of her recent services in the kitchen,

made her appearance, still invested with the canvass apron which she had put on upon that occasion, and forgotten to remove. Beatrice's cheeks coloured up till they nearly rivalled her ladyship's at sight of this inadvertent betrayal of her housewifely occupation, and hastening to her side she exclaimed in an angry whisper—"Good heavens! madam, do you take this for the chaundry or the scullery, that you enter it with this malkin's gear tied about you? Is it thus you meet our visitors?"

"Lackaday, child!" replied her Ladyship, quietly taking off the apron and folding it carefully up—"I have been in the kitchen, and you would not have me stain a kirtle of red Bruges, or a partlet of lawn edged with Venice passement? You know not, Master Dudley, how careless are these turnspit-boys with their ladles and dripping; but as you have been abroad I warrant me you wot too well the value of a Bruges silk, not to excuse the apron, which, in good sooth, I forgot to take off."

"Troth, Madam," said Sir Lionel sneeringly, "since it is to be made public that you have

been among the spits, it would have liked me well that this old kirtle had been left behind as a largess to the cook, that so you might have presented yourself in some new and more becoming array."

" Bone Deus! Sir Lionel, surely this is handsome and costly gear enough to be worn by the daughter of a poor boroughreeve."

" Perhaps so, Madam, but not for the wife of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice."

" My Lady is not apparently aware," said the little doctor, mincing his words and laying down the law with his forefinger—" that although by a Statute passed in the third year of King Edward IV., the wives of commoners were forbidden, after the Feast of the Purification then next ensuing, to wear cloth of gold and silver, or velvet upon velvet, or purple silk; or to carry furs of Martiron, Letyce, and pured grey Minever, or any other pellure but black or white lamb; or to put on lawn or romple; or to wear any fustian, bustian, or fastian of Naples——"

" Twit! twit!" cried Sir Lionel, impatiently.

interrupting him, "we want not the whole statute, and if we did, we have not now the time, for the dinner waits us."

"Alas the while!" exclaimed her ladyship—"I shall have but poor appetite to eat it, for as if the money were not scattered fast enough already, here is another pane of glass broken in the damask bed-room, and God wot the price of a new quarry! Joan shivered one on St. Hilary's day with the staff of her besom, and this, I warrant me, was broken by the idle grooms, who are ever throwing pebbles at the wenches in the chamber above, though they tell me it was shattered by the wind; certes we shall soon have ruffling nights, and were it not well, Sir Lionel, to move out our glazed windows and board them, before we have more fearful losses?"

A look of silent contempt was the only notice taken of this inquiry by the party to whom it was addressed, while Beatrice again whispered in her ear—"It may like you, Madam, to be reminded that these are matters for the steward and the carpenter, not for Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of The Tor."

"Alas, child, I hope I have not said aught to anger him, for truly I meant it not. But there must be thrift somewhere, or heaven knows how long this riot may hold out. Well-a-day! I am heavy at heart when I think on't." A deep sigh and a look of profound sorrow supported this assertion ; but as if in mockery of her economical misgivings, a chamberlain entered to announce the dinner, the music struck up a joyous flourish, and they passed through a crowd of bowing and glittering servants into the adjoining apartment, where Lionel was again placed by the side of Miss Fitzmaurice.

It has been often observed, that people who attain unexpected dignities or elevation, are jealous of the distinction to which they have been raised, and rigorously exact such marks of homage as assure them of their eminence ; while they who have been always accustomed to them, from having been born to greatness, either receive them as a matter of course, or are quite indifferent to their omission. Sometimes, indeed, the humility of the great arises from a wish to appear superior to their fortunes, a spe-

cies of pride in disguise, from which Sir Lionel was at least exempt. There was no hypocrisy in his arrogance ; it was open and avowed : he asserted his rank, or rather his power, in every look, word, and motion, as if he loved to pamper his imagination with the perpetual conviction of his own grandeur, not less than to impress it upon others : offences of any sort he seldom forgave ; towards those who had treated him with disrespect, he was utterly implacable.

In Beatrice the same jealousy of station was modified rather in the manner of its display, than in the depth of the feeling itself. Her deportment, indeed, was generally liable to the imputation of direct hauteur, although not so coarsely marked as her father's ; but at times her method of asserting herself would assume an oblique direction. Did she condescend to notice an inferior, it was done with a patronizing air that stamped her own sense of her superiority, even while she affected to disclaim it. The common feminine artifice which enables women to extort flattery by pretending to deprecate their own charms or good qualities, she extend-

ed to Sir Lionel's state, or her own personal splendour ; endeavouring to draw attention to what they possessed, by pointing out what they wanted. Thus she expressed her regret to Dudley, that her father had no henchmen to stand by his side during meals, no regular cup-bearer; no yeomen of the buffet, no master of the horse, though she was free to confess that so far as their poor establishment went, it was richly and admirably appointed. Did he praise her bracelets, she begged him not to admire them, declaring she was quite ashamed of them. "The diamonds indeed," she added, extending her arm that he might inspect them—"are of the first water, and of great value ; but the little pearls are only artificial, which spoils the whole." Dudley did not see through these and other similar contrivances of girlish vanity, or if he did, he disliked them not. He was smitten by her beauty, pleased with her vivacity, struck by her stately and superior air, all of which seemed to display themselves with particular attraction in their present interview ; and notwithstanding the unfavourable impressions he entertained respecting

the father, he could not help feeling a decided and increasing admiration of the daughter.

In the course of the conversation during dinner, Sir Lionel stated that his servants had been searching for the clock beneath the walnut-tree in the Abbey church-yard, but without effect, as, although the ground had evidently been just dug up, and they had ascertained its interment, they could discover no traces of the buried treasure, the secret removal of which he scrupled not to attribute to the craft and rapacity of the monks. Assuming this imputation for fact, he pronounced a fierce and angry philippic against the whole order, but more especially against the abbot, comforting himself, however, with the assurance, that the hour of retribution for all their enormities was at hand, and that the entire establishment would shortly be crushed beneath the ruins of that gigantic power which they had been so many ages in building up.

"About fifteen, Sir Lionel," exclaimed the doctor, again lifting up his two forefingers, and making them his expositors. "I think we may say nearly fifteen ages, so far as Glastonbury

Abbey is concerned, for it is said to have been founded by the saint who performed the funeral rites of our Saviour, although it was then only built of wattles and wreathed twigs, a modest and slight foundation for the present proud and ponderous mass, which is as a mountain of stones rising up in the plain. St. Patrick in the year 439, and St. David in 520, were both munificent patrons; but it was Ina, King of the West Saxons, who far exceeded all others, and rendered this monastery independent of the episcopal authority."

"But not of the royal," interrupted Sir Lionel, "which shall ere long lay those lofty towers, that seem as if they would climb up to heaven, prostrate on the earth from which they were dug; ay, and humble to the dust this proud lord abbot, spite of his bloated state, his bandied monks, and his pampered officials, of whom no man may tell the number."

"Under your good favour, Sir Lionel," observed the Doctor, again porrecting his forefingers, the Obedentarii are regularly numbered and enrolled, being, after the prior and sub-

priors, first the *magister operis*, who has the care of the buildings ; second, the *eleemosynarius* or almoner ; third, the *pitantiarius* or distributor of pittances ;—fourth, the *sacrista*, or *sexton* ;—sixth, the *camerarius*, or chamberlain ;—seventh, the *cellarius*, or cellarer ;—eighth, the *thesaurarius*, or burser ;—ninth, the *precentor*, or chanter ;—tenth, the *hospitarius* ;—eleventh, the clerk of the holy water ;—twelfth, the—” “Twit, sir, twit!” cried Sir Lionel, impatiently starting up—“if you are to name them all, we shall not have done till even-song. Follow me, sir, and I doubt not you shall stand well excused of the company for not completing the list.” Sir Lionel having finished his meal, retired from the room as he spoke these words, bowing slightly to Dudley ere he went ; the doctor obsequiously followed him ; and the music, stationed in the antechamber, sounded the customary salutation as the stately master of the mansion passed along.

Dudley had hardly entered into conversation with Lady Fitzmaurice and her daughter, glad to be relieved from the presence of the austere

and haughty knight, when a servant came to inform him that a female had been admitted into the waiting-room by the great hall, who requested to speak to him, a communication at which he expressed no small astonishment, not being aware that he had the honour of a single acquaintance in that part of England. Nor was his surprise diminished, when upon inquiry he was informed that she was a well-accoutred personage, who had apparently come from a journey, her boy-groom being hardly visible for the luggage with which his horse was loaded. “Doubtless some heroine of romance, mounted on a goodly palfrey, and attended by a gentle page,” exclaimed Beatrice, drawing herself up and slightly colouring. “You have been in the French court, sir, and at the field of gold cloth, and have unwittingly won some noble damsel’s heart, who instead of sending her page alone, as fair Emmeline did to the child of Elle, has thought it meet to accompany him. If there be lodging worthy of her at The Tor House, pray bid her honour our poor roof with her presence.”

"Nay now, do so, in good sooth," cried Lady Fitzmaurice, taking this speech literally; "truly she shall be as welcome as spring-leaves to the birds, or may-flowers to the bee and butterfly; she may sleep in the damask chamber, and the glass window shall be mended, for I warrant me she will take good heed not to break it again; the more, Master Dudley, if you just hinted the cost to her."

Declaring that he had no acquaintance whatever whom he could presume to intrude upon her ladyship's hospitality, and that there must be some mistake in the matter, which he would immediately proceed to elucidate, he hurried to the waiting-room, where he could not repress a smile at encountering his hostess, Sib Fawcett, attired in her best russet, and flaunting in a new hood and scarf of Kendal green. "Give you good 'morrow, honourable Sir, and many of them," she cried with a low curtsey; "and it may like you to know that the churl Will Mattock was set in the stocks; and by my fackins he was rarely bemauled; for as he is a shrewd cracker of costards with his staff, and apt to be as over-

thwart as Mahound or Termagaunt with the urchins, I warrant me there was never a clown nor child in the parish but was right glad to jibe and pelt him, when they saw the sturdy rogue fast set in the bilboes. Please you to understand, good Master Dudley, that I had warned him not to attack your French gentleman ; bless him ! I hope he is well to fare, for he is a merry grig and a comical—and when I saw the churl strike at him with his cudgel, I cried out to him, even as I had heard the mad poet flout him—

“ Mazed, witless, smeary smith,
Go hammer with hammer upon the stith”—

but drive not away honester men than yourself, good men and true, with royals in their pouches, who come to pay their master’s bills, you pennyless pole-hatchet.”

“ And paid it shall be, my good woman,” said Dudley, “ for such I suppose is the purport of your visit, so soon as you deliver my valise, which my servant was also instructed to bring away.”

"Go to, Sir, think you I would ask for the validome of a doit, without bringing back the big mail, if that is what you mean? Mercy be praised, Sib Fawcett has golden ruddocks in her locker, and has little need and less mind for pilling or pollage, or taxing or tollage, or aught but her own, to which they say, the devil himself is entitled, God forgive me if I am naught! So your mail was well cared for in your absence; and when I found you were to tarry with Sir Lionel, (I hope the worthy and worshipful knight is well,) I strapped it to the back of a stout gelding, set my son Dickon before it (a sweet little horseman he is) rode over with him to the Tor; and if it like you to step into the stable-yard where the hawks are mewed, and the grooms have lifted it down, you may examine it yourself, and see that all be right, ere you suffer me to behold cross or pile in payment of my bill." For the satisfaction of all parties, Dudley thought it expedient to assent to this proposition, and proceeded accordingly to the place indicated, where he found Dickon mounting guard over the great package, which he had been strictly

charged by his mother not to quit until her return, as she knew that some of Sir Lionel's servants had no very fastidious notions with regard to property. No sooner, however, did the urchin see preparations made for unstrapping and opening it, than the apprehension that some new monster might jump out, not less formidable than the one he had encountered in the Horn Chamber, induced him to recede some paces from the scene of action, where he stood staring at the lid, with an earnest and portentous obliquity, at the same time mumbling a paternoster to himself, and with one hand behind him slyly making crosses upon his back, for fear of giving offence by any overt betrayal of his suspicions.

Every thing being found, to Dudley's great satisfaction, precisely as he had left it, he paid the hostess liberally, not forgetting Dickon; when the mother and son, with a profusion of thanks, remounted their horses, and immediately quitted the Tor House. No sooner had they passed the gate-house, and become concealed by a cluster of trees, than Sib pulled up, crossed herself repeatedly with great devotion, pro-

nounced a paternoster, and exclaimed—" Evil befall the foul fiend and all his well-willers ; and if ever again I cross the threshold of a doomed man, except upon a lawful occasion like this, to recover my own, death be my dole." She spat upon the ground as she spoke, and made a cross in the dust with her foot, which Dickon imitated and ejaculated, "Amen!" when he fumbled into the deepest corner of his pocket, out of which he drew a small coin, and cried— "Mother, mother! shall I chuck the silver groat he gave me down the holy well at the Abbey?"

"Ods life, child! no; would ye be such a graceless scatterling as to throw away good silver, marked with the blessed cross? Marry! it's safe to keep such coin as that, even if it come from the hand of the foul fiend himself; as who knows that it may not have done? St. Mary assoil us all! Howbeit, such an aglet-baby as thou art, can have no need of it, whether it bring weal or woe." So saying she took it from him, and depositing it in a little leather bag, which she again carefully concealed about her

person, they both pursued their journey towards her own hostel.

Dudley, in the meanwhile, remained by the mew where the hawks were kept, observing the master falconer, an elderly steady-looking personage, in a green cap with a heron's feather, who, while whistling a tune, was very deliberately sealing, as it is termed, a newly-taken hawk ; a process which consists in running a thread through her eyelids, and sewing them down over the eyes, to prepare her for being hooded. Had he been passing his needle through canvas he could not have evinced a more utter indifference ; though in sealing an unfortunate duck, which was his next operation, he was obliged to pay a more particular attention, as it was to be so performed as still to allow the bird to see backwards. By this means, as he explained to Dudley, it would fly the higher, and would answer the purpose of being thrown out as a lure to one of the soar-falcons, which was apt to take to the ground. The next victim of this scientific tormentor was a pullet, whose wings he broke, and then tossed it down to be worried and torn to

pieces by some young goshawks, in order that they might learn betimes how to plume their quarry. Such were the preparatives for an amusement which was equally cruel in every one of its details; such indeed are the characteristics of field-sports in general, which, although they might be appropriate to a barbarous age, when it was deemed "sufficient for a nobleman to wind a horn, and carry a hawk fair, leaving study and learning to the children of mean people," are surely little excusable in this enlightened æra, when every gentleman, not being an idiot, is presumed sufficiently capable of intellectual recreation, to while away a morning in the country, without wantonly torturing to death either birds, beasts, or fishes.

From this inhuman scene Dudley's attention was diverted by the sudden leap of a dog, flying at him with a violence which he at first considered as a hostile attack, and was preparing to defend himself accordingly, when he discovered that it was nothing more than the affectionate eagerness of his acquaintance Snowdrop,

whom he had assisted to rejoin his master, Cecil, in the tower. The poor animal evinced its gratitude for that service by a variety of more expressive demonstrations than he could have conceived it possible for a dog to exhibit; not content with which, after its first fervour of joy at the meeting had in some degree subsided, it seized the skirt of his coat, and tried to pull him along, as if resolved that the friendship so happily renewed should not be again speedily interrupted. But Dudley, after kindly caressing it, was anxious to be delivered from its importunities, that he might return to the more welcome associates whom he had left in the dining-room. All his efforts for this purpose proved unavailing. Snowdrop retained his grasp of the coat, with a look so expressive of resolution, that at length Dudley, struck by this obstinacy, suffered himself to be led away by his four-footed guide. No sooner, however, did the sagacious creature perceive that he was disposed to comply with its wishes, than it relinquished its hold, and walked forward, pant-

ing with anxiety, and turning its head repeatedly back, to see that it was followed.

In this manner was he conducted across a wood-yard and various out-offices, until, on passing through a low, arched door, he found himself outside the wall, between which and the moat was a narrow slip of ground, encumbered with weeds and wild vegetation. A rudely-marked path, formed by the servants and labourers, was still to be traced amid the tangled overgrowth, along which the dog proceeded, until, by skirting the exterior of the building, they arrived under one of the towers of the great hall, which Dudley immediately recognized for the same by which he had been previously enabled to reach Cecil's place of confinement. For the purpose of effecting some repairs in it, a ladder was placed against an open window, at a considerable distance from the ground. Up this the poor animal climbed, unaided and undismayed; and Dudley, who now began to guess the purpose for which he had been enticed to the spot, following close

behind, made his way into the tower, and thence, by the same route as before, to the roof of the great hall, and the wall of Cecil's prison. Not as before, however, did Snowdrop bark and leap, and betray a clamorous impatience. Although he wagged his tail with exultation upon gaining a glimpse of the tower, he uttered not a sound, but, as if afraid of being overheard, crept silently onwards till he arrived under the window, when he announced himself by a low moaning. This was quite sufficient for the quick ear of his master, who instantly appeared at the bars, his face lighted up with joy, and his hands eagerly thrust out to receive his favourite. By raising him up in his arms as before, Dudley enabled him to leap high enough to be caught and drawn through the window, when he witnessed a meeting still more tender, if possible, than that which had struck him with surprise upon the former occasion, the animal fixing its eyes upon its master with an almost human expression of fondness, and Cecil again weeping with emotion.

“ In our last interview,” said Dudley, “ which

was so unseasonably interrupted, I asked permission to become your friend: will you now allow me to repeat that request?"

" You have restored to me," replied Cecil, " the only friend I have ever found: for this accept my thanks—my gratitude. You have conferred upon me a boon which I would peril my life to repay; but I fear to seek a friend among my fellow-men, all of whom have hitherto requited my love with cruelty and contempt."

" At least accept my services in freeing you from this most infamous thraldom, and restoring you to your rights; for, as to the plea upon which you are thus immured, it has not, I venture to assert, the shadow of a foundation."

" If you mean the imputed derangement of my faculties," said Cecil, calmly, " I differ from you; for if the world is in possession of its right reason, I am most assuredly mad. I have obtained, indeed, but few glimpses of the people of reason; but if all that I have heard from others be sooth, they are but little worthy

of the name, for they have been represented to me as tamely submitting their fortunes, lives, and liberties, to one who seems to be the very worst of their own species;—a tyrant and a murderer,—who wantonly sacrifices women, favourites, and ministers, to his bloodthirsty caprice——”

“ God’s blessed Mother ! ” exclaimed Dudley, “ talk not thus—talk not thus ! the very walls have ears, wherever the King’s doings are so treasonably canvassed ; and when words like these come from the mouth, our bluff monarch is apt to make the head fly quickly after them.”

“ It is for the rational to be afraid of giving utterance to thought, which is the evidence of reason ; thank Heaven I am crazy Cecil, and may say what I like. What else do I behold among the world of sane people ? I see three orders,—the church, the army, and the law,—usurping all power to themselves, by agreeing to delude, intimidate, ensnare, and pillage the great mass of mankind, who are so besotted as to offer up themselves, and to destroy one another, for the benefit of their common oppressors

and tormentors. These are the people of reason, I say to myself; and I again bless God that I am crazy Cecil."

"Beshrew the books, cousin, that taught you these perilous notions; for they may not only keep you from your rights, but bring your life into jeopardy."

"I have been denied all access to books, but I have the more earnestly read the great volume of nature, whose language all may understand, and whose three leaves of earth, ocean, and sky, inscribed with the words Omnipotence, Justice, and Universal Love, once more assure me that the creatures of reason are not fulfilling the purposes of their Creator, and that I am blessed in not being enrolled among their number."

"For one so young, and who has seen so little, you seem to have reflected deeply, cousin Cecil, upon these abstruse points."

"I am not so young as others would have me thought—if I have seen little, I have suffered much—and my thoughts, denied all outward communion, have turned inward and been concentrated within myself. Such as they are, they

are my own. I know them to be contrary to the reason of the world ; and once more I rejoice that I am crazy Cecil."

" From the sentiments you have expressed, it will little grieve you, I suspect, to obey your father's dying commands, never to wear harness, or become a warrior."

" Earth has no reward to give, no torment to inflict, which could make me a soldier. I would not willingly destroy the meanest insect that crawls ; but to deface God's own image, wantonly to extinguish human life, and this, too, as a profession, as a servant to others—for hire ! none but a rational could be so degraded ; the soul of the crazy Cecil revolts from the very idea with an unutterable loathing. You started in our last interview, when I expressed joy at my father's death. Miserable as life appears to me, I think death an emancipation ; and shall I not rejoice when those I love are set free ? In all cases I am glad for the dead, that they have broken the prison of life and escaped ; but when a soldier dies, I exult for the living also, for they have a scourge the less."

" You will have as little difficulty, I apprehend, in obeying Sir Giles's second command, which was that you should marry, when you arrive at man's estate, and raise up heirs to the name and honours of the Hungerfords."

" Marry !" exclaimed Cecil, deeply colouring, while his eyes became suddenly suffused with tears—" Marry ! alas, if my heart were swelling with love—as perchance it may be now, —if it were breaking—as I trust ere long it will be—who will have compassion on me, who will treat me otherwise than with contempt ?—who will deign to speak of me except as ' an idiot and a boy ? ' "

" In sooth, cousin Cecil, you do yourself injustice, but you will be quickly disabused of this impression, when I set you free, as I hope soon to do, from this villainous imprisonment, and introduce you to the society of the world."

" The society of the world ? Angels and holy saints forbid it ! If you are indeed my friend, if you would truly serve me, if you would lay claim to my eternal gratitude—restore

me to the society of nature, continue to me the friendship of my dog. Let me run far and free upon my beloved Mendip hills by day, let me lie down with Snowdrop by my side, in the deep and dark silence of Wokey-cave by night, and be lulled to sleep by the gurgling of its invisible waters. There is not a naked crag or shaggy glen, no grove or glade, no copse or tangled dell, no shady nook to which the waters flow, that they may sing love-songs to the leaves; no sunny-blossomed mead, whence birds, bees, and flowers combine to throw up odoriferous music; no subterranean cave, within whose dark and voiceless sepulchre it seems as if Nature ceased to breathe, and the pulses of her heart to beat; there is no windy height or echoing hollow of the wild Mendip Range that is not familiar to my footsteps, and dear, most dear, to my bleeding memory! Oh, if you knew how sweet, how soothing, it is to my bosom to sit upon some height, and gaze upon the face of nature, till my sympathizing heart, saturated with the fulness of its beauty, expands and yearns with universal love!—Oh, if you knew

the joy, the rapture, the ecstasy that fills my soul when I can steal ere sunrise to some still-sleeping eminence, just beginning to blush with the consciousness of the approaching god of day ;—to gaze upon the great luminary as he ascends in his majesty above the horizon, while the light dances triumphantly up the sky, and the clouds wave their blazing banners above him, and the earth is flooded with his glory ;— to see the world start from its sleep into light and life ; to behold the illuminated hill-tops gleaming above the misty valleys ; to mark the flashing waters, the green meadows, and the many-twinkling leaves ; to catch the incense thrown up by the grateful earth in offering to its God, and hear the matin hymn of insects, birds, and beasts, while the deep organ of the wind gives tuneful and sonorous grandeur to the chorus that is wafted up to heaven !—then, as I sit all alone amid the wild scenery, in deep and solemn communion with the spirit of nature, do I obtain a short respite from the misery of existence ; then do the grateful tears gush from my eyes, then do I clasp my hands

together, then do I fall upon my knees,—and, as I bow my head to the earth, return thanks to its great Creator that I am not one of the sons of reason ;—that untormented by their angry passions, and no sharer in their turbulent pursuits, I am an outcast and a child of nature, the world-despised, solitary, crazy, Cecil Hungerford!"

Seeming to catch the inspiration of his own description, during this passionate outpouring of his feelings, his countenance had been lighted up with a fine and vivid enthusiasm ; but he had no sooner reverted to himself and his present situation, than his face saddened into its habitual melancholy. He passed his hand backwards and forwards across the bars of his prison, then laid it upon his heart, and while the tears trickled down his cheeks, exclaimed in a mournful voice—"I am as a bird that can only live amid the fields and leaves ; and if you could now feel how my poor heart pants and flutters to get free, you would wonder that it has not already beaten itself to pieces against the bars of its cage."

Dudley had hardly ever been so deeply affected, though it would have been difficult to decide whether compassion or indignation predominated in his bosom. "Be of good cheer, my dear and ill-used Cecil!" he exclaimed, "for, by all the saints of heaven, I swear to restore you to your rights, or to perish in the attempt. What! shall the son and heir of the brave Sir Giles Hungerford—"

"Hush! hush!" cried Cecil interrupting him, and pointing to Snowdrop, who, with erect ears, flashing eyes, and disclosed teeth, began to snarl;—"some one is coming; it is the captain. I know it by the dog's peculiar growl; he fears they will take him away again. Begone! begone! but let us soon meet once more."

Dudley quickly retired; as anxious as the prisoner to avoid discovery, but fully resolved, if other methods failed, to call Sir Lionel openly and personally to account, and insist upon Cecil's full and instant restoration to his liberty and rights.

CHAPTER IV.

Treating his base, subservient tools,
Knaves though they were, as gulls and fools,
Each he entices
To show the blackness of his heart ;
Then with sardonic grin, apart,
Laughs at their vices.

A LOWER room of the Tor House, looking into the great court in front, and communicating with a gallery that gave a view of the inner court at the back of the building, so as to command the whole of the extensive range, had been appropriated by Sir Lionel to his own purposes. Hence he could observe every thing that was going on ; here he had secret repositories for papers and letters which it was important to conceal ; here he always kept a supply of money for bribery or other hidden dis-

bursements, with which it was not expedient that his steward should be acquainted; and here, behind panels or recesses of the wall, known only to himself, were deposited weapons of all sorts, in case any surprise without, or treachery within, should prevent immediate access to the regular armoury. Into this chamber all intrusion of the domestics was specially forbidden, not only to prevent the chance of any discovery, but that he might not be interrupted while he was concocting his schemes of vengeance or aggrandisement; for it was one of his invariable principles never to admit any of his agents or accomplices into his full confidence. To a certain extent he was obliged to develope his dark machinations, but he never went further than was necessary for the perfect execution of his designs. Piquing himself upon the craft and safety, with which he could direct the most nefarious projects, he exulted in the thought that, even if defeated, he had so warily conducted them that nothing could be brought home to himself personally; and that, if the violated law demanded her victims, she might

seize upon the tools of his Machiavelian policy, but never entrap the master-hand that had guided them. To secure himself the more effectually against ultimate responsibility, he seldom gave written orders of any sort, and rarely spoke to one subordinate agent in the hearing of another.

It delighted him to think that he held in his hand a master-key to the master-passion of every person employed in his more important and dangerous plots : it was a recreation to him to dance these puppets for his profit and amusement ; to feel his superior subtlety by mocking their favourite propensities and playing upon their foibles ; to lure them on, and dangle their respective baits before them, till they avowed their readiness for any atrocity he might suggest ;—merely as a trial of his present skill, and an experiment of what he might expect from them upon any future contingency. Above all, it flattered the craft and pride of his very inmost soul to reflect that he held a halter around every one of their necks, and that he had only to give the signal the moment they

became troublesome or disobedient, in order to set his engines in motion, and make the public executioner his accomplice in getting rid of them for ever. Two persons, who had boggled in the execution of his more perilous purposes, and threatened a disclosure of his machinations, having been already thus disposed of, the remainder of his agents and myrmidons became convinced, that when they had once crossed the threshold of the Tor House, and become participants in any of his conspiracies, there were no steps backwards ; that they must go desperately forward with what they had begun ; and make up their minds to be the victims of their employer, the moment they ceased to be his accomplices.

While Dudley had been holding the colloquy with Cecil, detailed in the last chapter, Sir Lionel was in deep consultation with his two principal tools, the Doctor and Captain Basset ; the scene of their deliberation being the private chamber we have just described. It was his custom, when he meditated any atrocity, never to propose it at once, but to throw out some

dark suggestion of which his auditor might take hold, and by anticipating his intention, give it the appearance of having emanated from himself. He had launched some obscure intimation of this sort, respecting the disposal of Cecil, from which the Captain, who happened for the moment to be sober, recoiled with marked repugnance, instead of developing and advocating the adoption of the measure, which had been so covertly hinted at, rather than suggested. " 'Sdeath ! my noble master," he exclaimed, " surely your thoughts travel not that way, and I must have sent my wits clean beside your meaning, which may well happen to such a dod-dipate as mine. Dags and dagonets, Sir Lionel ! you have had good approof that I have a ready rapier by my side, which leaps after your word of command as true and as quick as the echo ; and by St. John Baptist, I am still as willing as ever to challenge all comers in your behalf, whether Christians, Jews, Turks, cannibals or Saracens : that is to say, in a gentlemanly and captainly way, fair and above-board, without sorcery or witchcraft, foot to foot, face to face.

and steel to steel ; for so we may still kill our man, and not run our heads into the hangman's noose. But as to any more desperate dealings with a defenceless and simple-witted youngster, anything beyond keeping in his present trap the bird that we have already secured, by cock and pie ! it were a piteous deed and a cruel, unbecoming my noble master to require, and unmeet for an old soldado like Ben Basset, who carries a conscience as well as a sword, to execute."

"Verily and in good sooth, and under your kind favour," said the obsequious doctor, who had been startled at the dark hint thrown out, and was happy to find that he should have his companion's support in opposing its implied purport — "the brave captain gives good advice, and maintains it with good arguments ; for it were not less needless than full of peril to adventure further than we have now gone ;—needless, forasmuch as the party can do nothing legally for himself, not having attained *ad annum vigesimum primum*, when his minority expires, although he may have reached the *etas pubertatis proxima*. This question naturally resolves itself

into three heads, which I shall proceed to state and discuss *seriatim*, without touching upon the consideration of danger which appears, and troth very naturally, to have excited the fears of the good captain."

" Fears ! thou camel-backed baboon," exclaimed the captain indignantly ; " fear and I are like fire and water, which cannot exist together. I am neither to be frightened nor saddened. Hang sorrow—care will kill a cat. Sing hey, nonny no, pipe tirlye, tirlowe, rapiers for ever, and a fig for the hangman ! But I said freely what I will stand to boldly, that such a foul deed were cruel and unnatural."

" May it like you, Sir Lionel, seriously to perpend what the good captain says ?" cried the doctor, looking submissively up to his patron ; " for certes, and in all sooth, if such a foul deed were done, it might justly be termed both cruel and unnatural."

" Buzzards and dolts !" exclaimed Sir Lionel, who had been listening to them, with a sneer of bitter scorn—" what cruelty can be unnatural, or where, if I would counsel you to some dark

and bloody deed, could you find an instructress more fell, savage, and relentless than Nature herself? Nine-tenths of the creatures that she has made are perpetually tearing the flesh and muscles, grinding the bones, and quaffing the gore of their fellow-animals, in obedience to the blood-thirsty instinct, for whose gratification she has taken care to provide them the fit weapons of claws and teeth, not forgetting to add the strength, speed, cunning, and acuteness of sense that may render them the most destructive. By these armed and ravenous beasts she has ordained that the defenceless and the innocent shall be tormented and devoured, expressly creating one to torture and prey upon another, and man upon all. What cruelty can exceed that of Nature, ye brainless babbles! when ye see the eagle peck out the eyes of the lamb, or the wolf fasten its fangs in the young kid, and slowly suck up its blood; or plague, famine, and earthquake go forth to ravage by wholesale? And what is the proud lord of the creation, whom she has called into involuntary existence, without condescending to explain to him why he was made,

or the purposes to which he was to be applied, what is he but a blind instrument, lured by an animal appetite to carry on a scheme of which he knows nothing, and thrown remorselessly aside, when this purpose is answered, to the lingering torments of age, disease, and death? We feed upon one another, and the grave swallows up all, only that fresh generations may arise to renew the same degrading round of darkness, misery, and a final return to the dust from which they sprang; and this blind circle have man and beast pursued until the earth itself has become a vast charnel-house, whose floor is paved with skeletons, and in whose sky-vaulted roof the sun has been hung as a lamp, that we may see all the ghastly horrors of our living sepulchre. Such are the tender mercies of Nature, and shall not her children be warranted to mete out to one another the same measure that they have received from their common parent? Speak, ye prattling moles!"

Awe-struck by the fierce energy of his manner, the doctor cast down his eyes, and cowered beneath him, without venturing a reply; but the

captain, who was not to be brow-beaten or intimidated, inquired in a voice almost as dictatorial as Sir Lionel's—"Look ye, my bold and noble master, Nature is a sort of queen, and, like our brave King Harry, may do as she likes; for the head that wears a crown, seldom feels a hempen halter under the chin; but Ben Basset is neither king nor Kaiser; and, besides, if the priests sing us a true song from the desk, or speak sooth from the pulpit, he who has a hard measure in this world shall be well to fare in the next; while they who now bear command, and pamper their paunches, shall toil in the ranks, run the gauntlet, and go lean upon the ribs."

"And do you see the hooded hypocrites live as if they believed their own fables?" inquired Sir Lionel with a sneer; "and would you yourself refuse a present gratification for the uncertain chance of a future one? Why then, most conscientious captain, I will not pour out the rosa solis of which I was about to ask your opinion, well knowing you to be a good judge at least of strong potations; for the priests have

declared such tippling sinful, although, as usual, they practise in secret what they denounce in public."

"Body o' me, Sir Lionel, I were a very dawcock and a puttock, if I asked leave of the shaven head and the woollen cowl to lift the flagon to my lips. Shall I fetch a cannikin that I may deliver present judgment upon the rosa solis? Beahrew my nose if it play me false; but methinks I smell it even here in the very presence-chamber."

"A staunch hound for scenting its own game," said the knight: and proceeding to a cupboard he filled a small silver tankard with the ardent spirit, which he handed to the captain.

"Slid!" exclaimed the latter, smacking his lips; "this is rare and royal, somewhat fiery or so; but it is a fire stolen from heaven, and makes me feel as if I had swallowed a new soul. I pronounce it most peremptory excellent; and he who tastes it and says me nay, is a liar in his throat:—in his throat, Sir Lionel, by the mass! that was well said, for his throat must feel it to

be a lie. What! my noble master, shall not Ben Bassett be believed, when he swears that it is divine, and that he, whose midriff it is warming, is your poor servant ever, to do your bidding with heart and hand, sword and dagger, against all your enemies, barring boys and simple-witted innocents, my brave commander?"

"With all reverence, and with the same reservation that the good captain has made," said the doctor, venturing for the first time to look up, "I beg to assure my patron, that he may depend upon my homage and obedience."

"Have you looked out the cabalistic number I required in Albertus Magnus and Hermippus Redivivus?" inquired Sir Lionel, speaking to him apart; "for the planets are auspicious, and the horoscope looks well for the advancement of projection."

"Does it so, does it so?" exclaimed the doctor, with sparkling eyes: "my kind patron, my best friend, how shall I evince my gratitude?"

"It likes me well," said Sir Lionel, turning to Bassett, "that you pronounce this a potable and palatable elixir."

The doctor started at the word; and a grin of delighted anticipation gave a smirk to his distorted features. "But sooth, my good captain," continued Sir Lionel; "he is but a bad judge who gives his verdict before he has heard both sides; so prythee taste the other tankard, and give me your deliberate opinion, for truly you are right welcome."

"Ha, ha!" cried the captain, after tossing off the potent draught, without hesitation—"by cup and can, by the foaming flagon, and the deep-throated black jack, may my lips never again kiss the silver tankard, if this be not most royal and celestial liquor, fit to set before St. Thomas of Kent, St. Joseph of Arimathea, and our Lady of Walsingham! By the rood, my noble master, I am no clawback, no flat-terer; and yet I say you have a kingly, delicate, and dainty taste; and that honest Ben Basset, who hates ingratitude, is ever ready to return good services for good liquor. What say'st, my little hunch-back, my dwarf doctor? have we not a brave commander, and shall we not do

his good pleasure without baggling at a bugaboo, or wincing at a scarecrow?"

"We were knaves and sorry rogues to deny it," was the reply; "always excepting, under Sir Lionel's kind favour and gracious consideration, any further proceedings of the nature so lately intimated, and which, I trust, we have all abandoned."

"The sun is in Leo, and the moon is in Cancer," whispered the knight, stooping down to the level of the doctor's ear; "and the twelve triangles of the horoscope are all of full promise; and last night I invoked the spirit, that emanation from Saturn and Mercury, whom Jerome Carden held in bondage; and he assured me that I should soon prosper, and be rewarded with the elixir vitae."

"Then the magnum opus is at hand," ejaculated the doctor, while his eyes looked as if they would leap out of his head. "My revered friend, my worshipful patron, my more than parent, my gainer of new life! what shall I do to serve you! how shall I devote to you the remnant of

this loathsome and deformed person, which is, I trust, soon to be transformed and renewed by quaffing the precious, the celestial, the inestimable elixir of rejuvenescence?" He looked as if he would have fallen at the feet of the knight, had not the presence of a third party deterred him; but Sir Lionel, without noticing his transport, turned to the captain, and continued— "Evil fall the miserly master that locks up every modicum left within the cruet, when there are brave men and thirsty that can pledge him with the supernaculum! How say you, captain? another little tankard finishes the pottle."

"When I say nay to such rosa solis as that, may my tongue be dried like a neat's, and hung up in the smoke of a lime-kiln, where no rain or dew can ever reach it. There goes the last tankard, my noble master; and by the foot of Pharaoh, 'twould have been better than the first, but that it emptied the pottle,—left it for a dead man! and a merry dirge go after it! sing rumble-down, tumble-down, hey, go, now, now! What! my brave commander; why need I go gadding and fisgigging after firking, fantastical

phrases ? I am honest Ben Basset, your soldado and your forlado ; and I were a cankered knave, and a puffin, and a dab-chick, and a paddock, which is worse than all, for it never drinks, an I would not do your bidding. What is a puling, clout-faced, shambling boy, that he should stand in the way of our noble master, who I warrant me haas other twiggen-pottles ready to shed their blood for those who will shed blood for him. How say'st, my puck, my robin-good-fellow, my doctorly hunch-bearer ? ”

“ This night shall I again invoke the spirit,” whispered the knight.

“ My best of patrons ! how shall I reverence, how shall I worship you enough ? ” replied the dwarf in the same tone.

“ What art mumbling and muttering about ? ” cried the captain, who was now become too pot-valiant to feel abashed at the presence of Sir Lionel ; “ reply, thou carrier of thine own flesh-pack, if thou art not too crooked to give a straight answer.”

“ Truly, you are some deal foul of mouth,” said the party thus unceremoniously addressed ;

" but touching your question, forasmuch as it concerns one who is sickly and non compositus, and can neither live long, nor be a rational creature while he does exist, of a surety we shall be well warranted in doing the will of our good and powerful patron, especially when we reflect in how vital and essential a way he will hold himself pledged to requite the service. Is it not right that the scale which holds power, and courage, and age, and wisdom, should outweigh that which contains nothing but a witless infant, for such he is in law?"

" Well crowed, my dunghill bally-doctor," cried the captain; " thou art most peremptory logical; for which I would clap thee on the back, if I could find room enough for my hand. Sing hey nonny no, pipe tirlye tirlowe ! vogue la galére, and a fico for care! Who's afraid of a girl-faced hobble-de-hoy, when he is called upon to do trewage to his liege lord the most noble knight Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of The Tor, who has twiggen-pottles of rosa solis in the celarage?"

" Who has seen the spirit of Jerome Cardan,

and had promise of the Titanus Magnatia, the inestimable, ineffable, inappreciable elixir?" added the doctor in an eager whisper to his patron."

"Wherefore, my doughty commander," resumed the captain,—"speak but the word, and by dag and dagonet, by sword and spur, by blood and fire, Ben Bassett does the deed, were it to pluck a devil from out the jaws of limbo, or to chuck a saint into them. Sing

"Troll on away, troll on away,
Sing heave and howe, romblelowe, troll on away."

"Condescend to favour us with the knowledge of your will, most mighty patron," continued the doctor,—"and we are your bounden slaves to do it."

"Away, then, to your posts!" exclaimed Sir Lionel, after having whispered to the captain, who, upon receiving his commands, nodded assent, and reeled out of the room, grasping his rapier fiercely with his left hand, and shouting in a loud hoarse voice the burthen of the ballad which he had just before sung; while the doctor, lost in an ecstatic vision of his ap-

proaching metamorphosis, walked slowly away, laying down his future plans with one forefinger upon another, muttering to himself, and apparently unconscious of every thing that surrounded him. "Buzzards and fools! gulls and knaves!" cried Sir Lionel, with a grin and fiendish sneer, when they had departed; "precious babblers ye are to preach of Nature's kindness, when ye are yourselves a proof what selfish and remorseless hearts she has created. She made ye to be the tools of a master malice, like my own; and even as I throw to my dog, to be devoured, the crust which has assisted me to cut my meal, so shall ye aid me to carve out my purposes, and then be tossed to the hangman for your pains. Am I to be blamed for striking, when such willing weapons offer themselves to my hand? When the world is divided into oppressors and victims, am I to be blamed if Nature has destined me by my superior talents to be one of the former, and steeled my heart against compassion for the latter? True, my purposes are guilty; but how are the learned and the good benefited by their unavailing

virtues? Sickened with his scholastic wisdom, Erasmus dedicates his learning to the composition of a book in praise of folly; while Sir Thomas More, hopeless of curing the vices and follies of mankind, bids his mind emigrate into an imaginary world, and seeks consolation for the miseries of reality by creating an Utopia. Scholar and philanthropist, I laugh at ye both; and am proud of my own superior choice. Instead of ridiculing folly by ironical praise, be it mine to take advantage of it: instead of ruling a visionary world, let me triumph in this; for the existence it affords would be miserable indeed, if I could not retaliate the injustice I have received, and look forward to age itself with pleasure, as it may serve me to mature my plans, and revenge the injuries of my youth."

At the conclusion of this soliloquy he leaned back in his chair, and sat for some time resolving in his mind the various plots and conspiracies in which he was engaged; reviewing the conduct of his numerous agents, both in the capital and the country; balancing the chances of their treachery, providing against defection

in any quarter, and congratulating himself on his superior finesse and adroitness, when he reflected that he held a halter around every neck, and had but to move his hand in order to stop the breath that would dare to reveal his secrets, or to mutter treason against his supremacy. So profound was his abstraction, while thus occupied, that he was insensible of the approach of Lady Fitzyaurice; until she stood close beside him; when he started suddenly up, and laid his hand upon the hilt of a dagger, which he always carried concealed beneath his doublet; but, ashamed of the emotion he had betrayed, when he recognized the visitant, he again seated himself, and said, with a cold look and in a stern voice, "How now, madam? what make you here? Wor you not that this is my private apartment?"

The flushed and agitated face of the party thus addressed betrayed that she had been recently weeping, and her eyes again filled with tears as she replied in a mournful tone—"Well-a-day, well-a-day, Sir Lionel, they say sorrow has got a key to the King's cabinet, and that no man

can shut up his ear from the voice of grief until the earth has rattled upon his coffin."

"What now, I trow," resumed the knight—"what new misery is toward? has a cauldron of soup boiled over in the kitchen—is there another quarry of glass cracked, or has one of the dairy-maids broken her churn and spilt the butter-milk?"

Though this was uttered with an expression of taunting irony, it was received as playful familiarity by her simple-hearted ladyship, who replied with an attempt at a smile—"La! you know, my dear Sir Lionel, by the five joys of our Lady—(and gramercy! I may well swear by them, for, heaven knows, I have none of my own)—by the five joys of our Lady, it likes me well to see you of such merry cheer; for of late you never greet me but with a stern and melancholy accost: and if I might hope pardon for saying it, I would tell you, though it pains my heart to remind you of it, that you are neither so kind nor so happy as was once your agent."

"I was never happy," exclaimed the knight,

with a bitterness of spirit that gave a malignant scowl to his face, as the futility of all his schemes was thus brought home to his bosom.

" Oh, yes, yes, yes ! indeed and in good sooth you were, before you climbed up into all this miserable greatness, of which, as I sadly fear, evil doings and unholy art are the foundation, and which can, therefore, never come to any righteous or successful end. Were you not happy, my dear Sir Lionel, when you came wooing to me at the miller's cottage under Hazelhurst Wood, and we sat in the little garden listening to the water that pattered from the mill-wheel, or the blackbird whistling in the large maple-tree, and you told me stories of the wars, or gathered me a posy of eglantine, pansies, and primroses, or sang me the ballad of the Bailiff's daughter of Islington, or King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid. Often do I think of those days, often does the whole scene float before my eyes, even till I fancy I hear the whistle of the blackbird and the popping of the water ; and often, often, often do I wish myself seated there still, with you by my side, as kindly and as happy as you

were in those days of smaller splendour, but of greater comfort, and—ah, Sir Lionel, my dear Sir Lionel, were they not also days of greater innocence?"

She had laid her hand upon her husband's during the latter part of this speech, and affectionately pressed it as she concluded ; but, withdrawing from her endearments, he coldly exclaimed—"Twit, madam, twit ! is it for this girlish tattle that you have left the spinning-wheel and the buttery, and intruded yourself upon my privacy? How long have you exchanged the housewife's coif for the friar's hood, that you thus presume to catechise me touching my days of happiness and innocence ? Gramercy ! madam, where learnt you this rare foolery ?"

"Forgive me, Sir Lionel ; in sooth, and on my soul, I would not anger you, no, not for the world ; but, tell me honestly, can you lay your hand upon your heart and say they were not days of greater happiness ?"

Indignant at being thus pertinaciously school-ed by one who had hitherto never ventured to expostulate against the keenest and most fla-

grant wrongs, and at the same time irritated by the consciousness that he could not answer her inquiry in the negative, he exclaimed, with a supercilious sneer, "When Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice of The Tor acknowledges the right of his wife to cross-question him, he will doubtless condescend to answer her interrogatories." In concluding this speech, he made a movement as if intending to quit the apartment; but Lady Fitzmaurice, resuming possession of the hand which he had withdrawn from her caress, continued in a tone of still greater earnestness— "Bear with me, bear with your unhappy wife, and hear her a little longer, for you cannot doubt my soothfastness and love; and never was I in more dolesome cheer, or sicker at my heart, than now. I have seen much, Sir Lionel, of so dark, and dreadful, and unholy bearing, that I shudder to think on't: I would lay down my life to set you free from the bondage of Satan and his devils, if, as my throbbing and misgiving heart tells me, I have not erred in my suspicions;—and yet, since you forbade my lips to open on this topic, I have held peace like a

trembling and unhappy, but dutiful and obedient wife. My husband's awful, his tremendous plight I have beheld, and never ventured to weep at it, except in secret ; and many a time have my prayers for his deliverance been choked and broken by my tears. My own personal wrongs—you know, my dear Sir Lionel, that they have been cruel and undeserved ; that I never gave you cause to prefer a proud paramour to a patient, humble, and loving wife : these wrongs I have endured, even seeking to conceal my wretchedness, lest it might seem to upbraid you. Far from reproaching you with words, I would not even do so in my looks. But there is a deed about to be perpetrated : I have just now seen a sight so piteous and so sad, that my heart will burst if I may not give utterance to my terrors, and warn you, implore you, supplicate you, by God's blest mother, to go no further in this ruthless doing."

"Gad-a-mercy, madam ! what scarecrow have you crossed, what grisly bugaboo has haunted you in the shape of a scooped turnip with a lighted match in its mouth ? Hast heard a

death-watch or a passing-bell ; has another coffin bounced against a turnspit's leg, or the raven in the buttery-yard resumed his ill-omened croakings?"

" Bone deus ! bone deus ! Sir Lionel," she replied, impatiently wringing her hands ; " this is no time for such scoffing, when, perhaps, at this very moment—poor youth ! poor Cecil ! poor Cecil Hungerford !—I saw him with my own eyes : his arms were pinioned, his mouth was gagged ; they were dragging him to the dungeon under the front tower !" Roused from the usual passiveness of her character by the recollection of the distressing spectacle she had witnessed, she threw herself suddenly upon her knees, clasped her hands, and, while the tears coursed one another rapidly down her cheeks, exclaimed in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by the passionate energy of her appeal, " Sir Lionel, my husband ! my husband ! this is his own house—you are his guardian—he is under our protection. Oh, if you have ever for a moment loved me—as you are yourself a parent—as you would avoid endless misery in

this world, and everlasting torments in the next, I beseech you by our blessed Saviour, and his holy mother and all good angels, let not any further harm come to Cecil Hungerford."

" And if I should, madam," cried Sir Lionel fiercely, his nostrils dilating and contracting with angry agitation—" you are doubtless the humble and patient wife who would treacherously betray what your prying folly has discovered ; you would play the informer's part, and get rid of a husband whose deeds—"

" Oh, never, never, never ! they should tear the tongue from my mouth, the heart from my bosom, ere I would prove a traitress to him whom I have sworn to love, honour, and obey. It is because I do and ever shall love you ; when innocent, because you deserved my affection ; when guilty, because I would win you to repentance : that I would save you the commission of another crime, more black, I fear, than all that have preceded it ; but by my holidame, and by the cross of Christ, and by my hopes of heaven, I swear, never, never to betray my husband !"

Drawing back his nostrils with a sneer of com-

placency at the solemn pledge which she had thus been entrapped to give, Sir Lionel coldly replied — “ It is a deep oath, madam; keep it as you would escape destruction. I believe that there is nothing to fear from the future enmity of her who has sworn it; and there is therefore no reason why we should change our present purposes at her solicitation.” So saying, he turned suddenly round, and walked out of the room with such rapidity, that Lady Fitzmaurice, unable to rise up from her knees to prevent him, could only ejaculate—“ My husband ! my dear Sir Lionel ! spare him ! oh, spare him !” when, overcome by the violence of contending feelings, every object swam before her eyes, her voice died away in inarticulate murmurs, and she sank fainting on the floor.

CHAPTER V.

None can that fatal sword withstand ;
'Tis wielded by a ruthless hand,
Inured to tragic
Deeds of blood ;—'tis said he's arm'd
With talismans, his weapon charm'd
By rites of magic.

WHEN Dudley had hastily parted from Cecil, alarmed lest the visitant announced by the growling of Snowdrop should discover their interview, he had resolved, in the first ebullience of his indignation, to seek Sir Lionel immediately, and demand not only the release of the prisoner, but his instant delivery to the Abbot of Glastonbury, conformably to the dying instructions of his father; but a short reflection convinced him that such a step, in the present posture of affairs, would be prema-

ture and dangerous. Much important information, indispensable to any ulterior proceedings of a legal nature, might easily be acquired, if he could obtain a few more conversations with his cousin. He had omitted to mention to him Sir Giles's orders on the subject of his removal to the Abbey; and, above all, he had forgotten to ascertain when his minority would expire, that he might be formally claimed from his guardian at that period, and restored to his full rights, should they be unable to extricate him at an earlier day. Cecil had declared that he was older than others wished him to be considered, but it was necessary to possess an exact knowledge of his age. It would be expedient also to adduce specific acts of maltreatment, if they thought proper to institute proceedings against Sir Lionel for a compulsory surrender of his ward, a subject upon which nobody could enable him to collect such satisfactory evidence as the unfortunate sufferer himself. Dudley had already seen enough to convince himself that there had been a gross abuse of authority towards the minor, and an iniquitous usurpation

of his estates; but as justice was then administered, and especially where a person of Sir Lionel's power and influence was concerned, he was well aware that there might not only be difficulty in procuring testimony, but that there was little chance of success, unless it was of the most irrefragable and overwhelming nature. A few more interviews would also enable him to confirm his cousin's perfect sanity, a most essential point, and one that could hardly be established upon the short and hasty conversations that had hitherto passed between them. Eccentricity and wildness of opinion, perversion of judgment, a morbid sensibility, and the reckless audacity with which he had arraigned the King himself, might indeed be adduced against him as aberrations from the established standards of thought, feeling, and prudence. Ignorance, too, might be expected in one whose education had been so shamefully neglected, and who had been denied all access to books; but so far from any natural stupidity, or inherent deficiency of intellect, he had evinced an originality and boldness of thought that implied

great intuitive power, and promised, under proper regulation and tuition, to constitute a mind of the very first order. Dudley felt that he himself would probably be the only witness who would venture to come forward, and speak for his unhappy cousin, and he was naturally anxious to be empowered to do so in a conclusive and satisfactory manner.

Influenced by these considerations to postpone his intended demand of Cecil's surrender, until he should have obtained from him all that might conduce to the efficient prosecution of his design, he determined to meet Sir Lionel for the present, as if nothing had occurred to render their intercourse less amicable than before. Nor was he without hopes that by preserving this friendly exterior, and leading the conversation to the subject of his cousin, he might entrap him into some inadvertent betrayal, that should enable him to fathom and defeat his machinations. It was ridiculous enough to suppose that he could overreach or undermine such a crafty opponent; but the last thing that a man suspects is his own deficiency in finesse;

and Dudley, having decided that he was warranted in using Machiavelian policy with an adversary who never employed any other, felt not the smallest diffidence as to his own abundant qualifications for the encounter. Hearing the sound of music, and concluding it to be the usual flourish of instruments that announced the appearance of Sir Lionel, he resolved to open the trenches immediately, and for this purpose proceeded to the cedar parlour, priming himself as he advanced with the subtlest leading questions, and devising the most cunning traps for discovery that his ingenuity could compass.

On entering the apartment, however, instead of finding an antagonist upon whom to exercise his jesuitism and casuistry, he beheld Beatrice by herself, playing upon the virginals, and just preparing to sing. " You are right welcome, Sir," she exclaimed, " for I ween there are few gallants of the French wars who cannot do as good service in a lady's bower as on the field of battle. There are many idle hours in a campaign, as I have heard my father say, when,

unless the lance could be exchanged for the guitar, and the toilsome march for featsome tripping to the pipe and tabor, the soldier's life were but a sorry doom. Here is a lute, of no mean merit when it falls into skilful hands ; and as I am but a beginner myself, I would fain take a lesson from one who has doubtless learned to touch it among the fair musicians of Gascony."

"Nay," replied Dudley, "I am an intruder upon Miss Fitzmaurice, and an interrupter of her song : let her voice be first heard, and she will be entitled, by the songster's law, to call upon me for such rude minstrelry as I have picked up amid the frequent alarums of the French border."

"Methinks, Sir," said Beatrice, who had always been accustomed to exact an implicit obedience to her wishes, "you might have also learnt, in that region of politeness, that when a lady prefers a request she expects a prompt compliance." This was spoken with a slight bridling of the head and an expression of some hauteur ; but presently, as if conscious that she had betrayed too proud an emotion at his want of instant

deference, she continued with an air of greater suavity—"Remember, Sir, that though we have a few musicians in our humble household, we have no vocalists, no master of the revels, who might instruct me in the songster's art. I boast no lore but what the precentor of Glastonbury has enabled me to glean; and, sooth to say, the good man had no music-book but his antiphonar, no better instrument than a three-stringed rebec, no livelier airs than a jubilee anthem, or a chorister's descant; wherefore I may well stand excused from taking the lead of one who has doubtless had teaching from masters of approof, and perhaps both seen and heard the great musician of the age, the celebrated Josquin."

"What strain would like you best?" said Dudley, bowing and taking up the lute—"a plaintive ditty, such as may best beseem its English words, or one of those merrier madrigals whose echoes are so often heard in the sunny fields of France?"

"Let it be a dolesome dump by all means, for with reverence be it spoken, your face wears little semblance of ever having been lighted up

amid the sunny fields you speak of, and will better accompany one of our native laments than a merry French jig."

Dudley, whose countenance still retained some portion of the angry indignation impressed upon it by his sense of Cecil's wrongs, smiled as he passed his hand along the strings, and, exclaiming—"If my looks be such tell-tales as you ween, I must borrow words from my poetical friend Sir Thomas Wyatt to explain the cause,"—began to sing—

"Marvel no more, although
The songs I sing do moan,
For other life than woe,
I never proved none.
And in my heart also
Is grav'd, with letters deep,
A thousand sighs and mo,
A flood of tears to keep.
How may a man in smart
Find matter to rejoice?
How may a mourning heart
Set forth a pleasant voice?
Play who that can that part,
Needs must in me appear,
How fortune overthwart
Doth cause my mourning cheer."

"Nay, Sir," resumed Beatrice when he had

concluded—" though I may well praise the music and the voice, your friend shall not let his fair words plead for your heavy cheer. Sooth, it is ever thus with you martialists who have passed the French border: you leave your hearts with some black-eyed beauty of the Gascon or Norman castles, and when you revisit the halls and bowers of England, you can but sigh and sorrow, and send your thoughts far away over the march of Calais."

" Under favour and with your pardon, I would assure you that your own thoughts are now wandering from the mark, and I have another friend and a well-worthy son of the Muses who shall vouch that you do me wrong." After preluding for a moment upon the instrument, he fixed his eyes upon Beatrice, and continued— " I will address you in the words of the noble Earl of Surrey to his fair Geraldine—

‘ All men might well dispraise —
My wit and enterprise,
If I esteem’d a pese*
Above a pearl in price ;—

* Pese and peason were formerly in use for pea and peas.

Or judged the owl in sight
The sparrow to excel :—
Which flieth but in the night,
As all men know right well.'"

Beatrice blushed as she applied this compliment to herself, and understood him to accuse her as the cause of his pensive mood ; but there was no displeasure in her emotion. No homage to her beauty had ever fallen more gratefully upon her ear ; and though her pride would not allow her to betray half the triumph that she felt, her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed, and she could not avoid a trifling degree of agitation, as, in compliance with Dudley's request, she addressed herself to the virginals and prepared to sing. " Truly, Sir," she exclaimed, " here is a short ditty and a sad, and though it might have better beseemed your own sorrowful mood than mine, which aspires not to grief of any sort, I will lend my voice to it ; not only that I may match your owl with another, but that you may tell me how you like Mark Smeaton's music. He is in high favour at court, which is no light praise, for our gallant King is himself a composer, and one of warranted approof,

I see there is no sort
Of things that live in grief,
Which at some time may not resort
Whereas they have relief.

The owl with feeble sight,
Lies larking in the leaves;
The sparrow in the frosty night,
May shroud her in the eaves.

But, wo to me, alas !
In sun nor yet in shade,
I cannot find a resting place,
My burden to unlade."

" If I mistake me not," said Dudley, " these words are by an old friend of my late uncle's, Sir Francis Bryan ; whose eye was thrust out by the Duke of Suffolk at the tilting of Havering in the Bower ; methought his verses were ever rugged as the rolling drum ; and if they now sound sweet and tunable to mine ear, I may rather thank the melodious sougstress than the poet's art."

Beatrice bowed gracefully to the speaker, and again presenting the lute to him, he avoided his former error by immediately complying with the wish thus intimated, and changing the strain with the language, sang one of Josquin's

chansonettes, which were then popular through the whole south of Europe.

"I have a merry varlet of a serving-man," said Dudley, when he had concluded, "that shall sing you rural French ditties and scraps of the old Troubadour ballads from matin-mass to vespers, and truly we had little other music than such rude relics and our church-anthems, until Josquin was sent to polish and enliven us. Every baron's hall indeed has still its instrumental minstrels, but as their voice is mute, the song was only heard in the choir, and upon the village-green, until this jocund Frenchman, adapting his light airs to the virginals and the guitar, gave mirthful moments and pleasant echoes to the lady's bower."

"How find you this lute?" inquired Beatrice—"it is of an esteemed maker."

"Why, indifferently good for an English artisan," replied Dudley; turning it round and round with a contemptuous scrutiny—"but under your gentle favour, our countrymen are sad bunglers, and their heavy hands are better fitted to the plough and anvil, than to any light

gear of taste or elegance ;—France is your only country for such dainty toys. Howbeit, the lute is a pretty bauble enough, were it not that it jangles somewhat like the gittern :—and I fear me it will be long ere we shall rival our Gallic neighbours, either in the softness of their guitars, or the rich decoration and classical design of their tailor's craft.”

A glance of conscious pride and satisfaction at his own splendid suit, which had been manufactured in Paris, did not pass unobserved by Beatrice, who, as she resumed that look of slight hauteur which had become so familiar to her, coldly observed—“ Pardie ! Monsieur Dudley, the country maidens of England, who have neither Paris tirewomen, nor Savoy kirtles, nor Venice partlets, nor French hoods and scarfs, must show but as village malkins to eyes that have doated upon the tasteful trim of foreign dames.”

“ Unless, as in the case of Miss Fitzmaurice,” replied Dudley with a look of respectful admiration—“ they unite the superior bloom and beauty of England to the natural grace that

embellishes every thing it adopts, and constitutes an inimitable fashion of its own."

"The fashion of compliment is, at least best acquired among our neighbours," said Beatrice, not only appeased but gratified by the flattering turn he had given to the conversation—"and as I see that it were poor taste to ask an English song, I will beg another of the Frenchman's chansonettes."

In acquiescence with this request Dudley resumed the lute. Beatrice, when he had concluded, again applied herself to the virginals: they sang duets together for some time, and when they parted Dudley found additional reason to rejoice that he had concluded upon remaining for the present an inmate of the Tor House, where he might have daily intercourse with one for whom he felt an increasing admiration; while Beatrice, notwithstanding the momentary pique she had experienced at his avowed preference of French fashions, confessed to herself, as she retired to her own apartment, that no homespun gentles were half so graceful, courteous, and urbane, as these travelled gallants, who brought back with them to England the

polite accomplishments of foreign courts. So few indeed were the visitants of any sort who came to vary the stately uniformity of the Tor House, and those few were of a figure and deportment so decidedly inferior to Dudley, that it will excite little marvel that his presence should awaken a fluttering at her heart, to which she had hitherto been a stranger, and of which she could not at first suggest to herself any satisfactory explanation.

From the time that had elapsed in singing, and in the interesting dialogue that succeeded to it, Dudley concluded he might now revisit Cecil with a probability of finding him freed from the intruder, whose approach had so abruptly terminated their morning's colloquy; and he accordingly betook himself, by the same circuitous route as before, to the place of his confinement. On arriving under the barred window of the tower, he pronounced his name, at first gently, and several times afterwards in a louder tone, but without effect; even a pebble which he threw into the chamber remained unnoticed; and as he was well convinced that his

cousin's acute ear, and the still sharper one of his dog, could not fail to catch the signal, had either of them been within, he was left to the mortifying certainty that he had been removed to some more secret dungeon—a change that could have originated only in the most suspicious motives, and which might expose the unfortunate prisoner to the dark dealings of Sir Lionel, without a witness to ascertain his fate, or a champion to avenge it. All his calculations and arrangements were now suddenly baffled ; his reasons for temporising with the oppressor, in the hope of gathering important information from the victim, no longer remained in force ; and it was useless to sound Sir Lionel as to his ulterior views, when he had thus discovered, by involving his projects in deeper secrecy, that they were of too nefarious a nature to bear the eye of man, or the light of day.

Stung at the thought of his being thus foiled and outwitted, and more and more convinced that some new outrage was about to be perpetrated upon his ill-fated cousin, which might require the promptest interference to prevent it,

he hurried back to the house, resolved to seek Sir Lionel, demand his intentions towards his ward, and claim his immediate surrender to the Abbot of Glastonbury. To personal fear he was a stranger, and yet he could not help feeling that he was too completely in the power of the man whom he was about to call to an account, to expect success from intemperance and violence, and he resolved accordingly to accost him in the first instance without unnecessary vehemence, and yet to urge his demand with firmness. Some misgivings as to the supernatural protection which the powers of darkness, with whom he was thought to be in alliance, might extend to him in the hour of need, did indeed flit athwart his mind ; but recollecting the righteousness of his cause, he cast them from him, and advanced with a resolved and undaunted heart to Sir Lionel's private room.

He found him seated at a desk, and perusing some papers, which he hastily locked up as he entered the apartment, and gazed upon his unexpected visitant with a look of stern inquiry. " I should apologize, Sir Lionel," said Dudley, " for

this intrusion, but I hope to stand excused when I inform you that affairs of moment will summon me quickly from the Tor House, and I am anxious to know, before I am called hence, when I am to see my cousin Cecil, and when it is your purpose and good pleasure to send him down to the Abbey."

"What, Master Dudley!" replied the knight, drawing himself up, with a cold contemptuous look, "you can apply to the legal guardian for information, when you can no longer obtain clandestine interviews with the crazy ward. Nay, Sir, start not; and let your reddened face resume its hue: I would fain save you such bootless trouble for the future, and it may therefore stead you to understand that you stir not a step, you utter not a word, you hear not a voice, you scarcely conceive a thought, within the precincts of the Tor House, which is not as perfectly well known to me as to yourself."

"It is you, Sir Lionel, who should rather blush," replied Dudley, striving hard to suppress his resentment—"for having compelled

me, by your unwarrantable imprisonment of my cousin, to have recourse to a mode of proceeding which is foreign to my nature, and to which, under other circumstances, I should have scorned to stoop. Favour me with the knowledge of your intentions respecting him, and I pledge myself not to attempt a repetition of my visits."

" You are at all liberty, Sir, to make the attempt whenever it lists you; but I cannot flatter you with any prospect of success: he is beyond your reach."

" I would wish to know by what right he is secreted from his friends, Sir Lionel."

" It would like me as well, Master Dudley, to know how you prove yourself to be his friend, and by what authority you would supersede the legal right of an appointed guardian over a crazy minor?"

" I deny that he is crazy: and the power by which I would withdraw him from your control is the dying order of his father, explicitly conveyed to yourself, in the letter which I placed within your hands."

" Of such an important document you have doubtless secured an attested copy ? "

" No, indeed, I never entertained a suspicion that such a precaution could be necessary."

" God's pity, Master Dudley, you were much to blame,"—said Sir Lionel, with a derisive curl of the lip—" for by inadvertently mixing it with other papers, I have unfortunately destroyed the letter."

" But you read it, and must doubtless recollect the contents," cried Dudley, indignantly.

" It would boot me little to deny the first point, but the second might be somewhat difficult of proof."

" Sir Lionel, Sir Lionel, this is unworthy equivocation : if you have forgotten the contents, let my avouch suffice. I stood by the bed-side of my dying uncle, I indited the letter in question, and can therefore hardly be mistaken as to his last orders."

" Surely, Sir, you brought others forward to hear and bear witness to his dying words ? "

" I have already told you, Sir Lionel, that I

was the only person present upon that sad occasion."

"Gramercy, Master Dudley, you were much to blame!" cried the knight, with another look of supercilious derision, that almost provoked his visitant beyond the bounds of patience; although he still controled himself sufficiently to exclaim, with a forced composure, "Sir Lionel, unless my own just demands, and the orders of the late Sir Giles Hungerford, be met by a prompt and honourable compliance, I forewarn you that I shall proceed instantly to enforce them in a court of law."

"Where you have no orders to produce," said Sir Lionel with a sneer; "and where your solitary, unsupported testimony will doubtless weigh much against Sir Giles's letters of attorney, and the formal vouchers with which, in the face of the whole neighbourhood, he appointed me the legal guardian of his son?"

"Surely, Sir Lionel, you have not the meanness to avail yourself of any such legal difficulties."

"Surely, young gentleman, you have not

the folly to suppose that I shall suffer you to fathom what my intentions are."

"I thought I had to deal with a man of honour," said Dudley, scornfully; "it is too clear that I am mistaken."

"I looked to be interrogated by a coxcomb and a brainless boy," replied the knight, with a provoking calmness, "and I find that I was right."

"Knave and usurper!" cried Dudley, almost choked with sudden passion, "my sword should chastise this insolence, and do me instant justice, but that the bar of thy base birth protects thee from its point."

"Ha! hast thou uttered the unforgiven word?" cried Sir Lionel, leaping upon his feet, and tearing his rapier from its scabbard, while his eyes flashed fire, and his nostrils dilated with uncontrollable wrath—"draw and defend thyself, ere I spit thee like an unresisting calf, for, by heaven and hell! thy doom is sealed."

"Thy base blood be upon thine own head," said Dudley, unsheathing his weapon, and throwing himself into an attitude of defence; "come

on, villain, and meet thy fate, for some good angel whispers me that mine arm is destined to avenge my cousin's wrongs, and the death of thy slaughtered victims."

"Thou wilt find it a lying spirit, boy," exclaimed Sir Lionel; and eagerly crossing his sword with that of his antagonist, he made two or three fierce lunges, which were dexterously parried; for Dudley, as we have already mentioned, was an almost unrivalled master of the weapon: but when the latter attempted to become the assailant, his rapier, wrested from his grasp with a violence that almost dislocated his wrist, flew upwards till it struck the ceiling, and at the same instant his opponent, rushing forward, made a furious pass at his throat. The steel glided through his ruff without wounding him, but so forceful was the thrust, that the hilt of the sword struck him so as to make him reel, and the active and athletic Sir Lionel, again pressing irresistibly forward, bore him to the ground, and leaped exultingly upon his prostrate body. Grasping his throat with one hand, and uplifting his invin-

cible sword with the other, he looked down upon him for a moment with a triumphant scowl, and then exclaimed, "To hell, insolent meddler as thou art! and tell the Lord Dawbeney, Sir Launcelot Wallop, and Master Trevor, 'twas I that sent thee!"

Totally unable to rescue himself from the clutch of his gigantic assailant, already did Dudley see the fatal weapon gleaming before his eyes, already had he abandoned himself to his seemingly inevitable fate, when a piercing shriek echoed through the apartment, and Beatrice, rushing precipitately forward, threw herself upon her father, and arrested his uplifted arm, at the same time screaming out—"My father! my father! would you murder your guest beneath your own roof?"

"Off, unduteous girl! begone, audacious minx!"—cried the knight furiously, "were he ten times my guest, he dies the death!"—He struggled to disengage himself, but she clung to him with a force scarcely inferior to his own, and looking upon him with an expression of inflexible determination, exclaimed in a firm

and resolute voice—" Kill me you may, but you shall not drive me from you!"—Sir Lionel rose, with the apparent purpose of shaking her off by sheer strength, but he had no sooner liberated Dudley, than she cried out, " Fly, Sir, fly ! my father is mad, and knows not what he does :" while she still grasped her parent's arm with undiminished vigour.

Seeing that no time was to be lost, and feeling that there was little disgrace in retreating from one whom he firmly believed to be assisted by sorcery and necromantic aid, Dudley arose, picked up his rapier, bowed with a grateful expression to Beatrice, and quitting the apartment, walked across the great hall, hurried along the causeway, and turned his back upon the Tor House, agitated with a variety of contending emotions, but still soothing his wrath and mortification with the conviction that his hitherto-unconquered sword had not been wrenched from his hand by mortal power, but the unholy and unopposable mastery of devils.

CHAPTER VI.

Wretch ! thou 'rt too drunken to be slain :—
If with thy vulgar blood I deign
 My sword to sully,
'Tis not thy forfeit life to take,
But that thou may'st awhile forsake
 Thy trade of bully.

SUCH was the indignant agitation of Dudley, that, without prescribing to himself any immediate object, or in the least adverting to the direction that his footsteps were taking, he continued walking eagerly forward, imagining and rejecting one scheme after another, for the deliverance of his cousin and the signal chastisement of his unprincipled guardian. The sword, as he had fully experienced, was of little avail against one who had either wielded an invincible weapon, or could summon unseen demons to

wrench that of his opponent from his grasp, and hurl it in the air. If he attempted legal proceedings, Sir Lionel himself had pointed out in a few words the difficulties with which he would have to contend ; he felt the total deficiency of evidence on his own side, the preponderating weight of testimony on the part of his opponent ; and he had reason to believe that perjury, corruption, and intimidation, would not be spared, if they were found necessary to defeat his purpose. Even a direct appeal to the King, which he was inclined to think the most feasible measure, appeared to be fraught with danger when more narrowly considered. Beyond the imprisonment of his cousin, which would of course be attempted to be justified by his imputed imbecility, he had no distinct or tangible accusation to advance. Sir Lionel, on account of his noble and commanding figure, personal prowess, and dexterity in all chivalrous sports and exercises—qualifications which always insured the good opinion of the King—was known to stand well in his favour ; and Henry, not less arbitrary than capricious, might visit as a tem-

porary offence the attempt to substantiate a charge against any one for whom he entertained a friendly feeling, especially if there should be a failure in the proof.

Lost in reveries of this nature, he at length approached the Manor of the Mere, one of the dependencies of Glastonbury Abbey, where a rich and lovely scene lay outspread before him, which, if his mind had been in a fitting state to receive the calm and holy influences of nature, could not have failed to soothe it into tranquillity. It was an autumnal evening, warm, silent, and serene, the setting sun throwing a golden bloom over the unrippled waters of the little lake whence the place derived its name, and lighting up the wood that rose gradually from its further margin, every leaf so motionless, and the whole tufted range suffused with so warm a flush, that it might almost have been imagined to have just fallen asleep for the night. Several ponds, or smaller lakes, presented portions of their gleaming surfaces around the Mere, shaded and intermingled with groves, copses, umbraeous islands, and rich open meads, until it be-

came difficult to distinguish the boundaries of either, so completely did the mellow sunlight, in which they were all flooded, melt them into one another. Close to the borders of the greater lake stood the Manor House, an antiquated building, whose numerous tops of carved wood-work, once pointed, though now rounded and corroded by time, its large gothic windows, its solid castellated gate-house in front, and the suburb of barns, granaries, and well-thatched stacks behind it, left you in doubt whether it were a religious edifice, the old family mansion of a gentleman of worship, or the abode of some substantial yeoman or wealthy farmer. The glaring colours and sharp angles of any newer structure would have refused to harmonize with the soft scene around it; but the time-worn pinnacles of the present building, and the varicoloured tints left by the breath of departed ages upon its walls, gave it the semblance of having grown old with the venerable trees by which it was overshadowed, and blended it as mellowly with the scenery as if it constituted a portion of the natural landscape.

Earth and water had combined to enrich this fertile manor with every variety of pastoral wealth. Notwithstanding the heat of the season, its meads were gladdened with a thick and flowery aftermath. Unscared by the sound of the woodman's axe, the trees spread their gigantic branches far and wide, as if anxious to extend their protecting shade to man and beast. Nothing but the whiteness of the sheep, clustered beneath them, betrayed that they had lost their fleeces, for from their size and rounded plumpness they might have been thought to be still robed in their wool. In the fish-ponds behind the mansion was goodly store of the finny tribe, which, when they occasionally heaved themselves upwards to the surface, appeared from their enormous size to be ancient tenants of the place, and by their reverend and substantial look might almost justify the phrase applied to them by Dudley, when he termed them the abbots of the water. Although the sun had now retired from the orchards, which extended themselves by the side of the fish-ponds, he could see that their laden branches, bending to

the earth, would have broken with their riches, had they not been carefully propped ; and even in the shade their fruit exhibited a bright and ruddy glow, as if the truant gleams of sunshine still lingered on their sides. The large sleek cows, brought up to the homestall to be milked, were quietly feeding from cribs overflowing with rich clover, whose fragrance, retained by the moist air wafted from the lake, diffused on every side a cool odoriferous freshness, rendered peculiarly grateful by the sultriness of the previous morning. Beyond the homestall was a small enclosed park, over whose paling the deer, lifting their antlered heads, gazed upon Dudley with eyes of mild wonder ; while, from little shrubberies and plantations of underwood that fringed the approach to the mansion, the pheasants, too tame to be startled at his presence, came forth to seek their evening food, some giving their rich colours to the sun, and others moving about indistinctly in the shades of the covert.

The lake, along whose shore the Manor of the Mere extended its quiet and sequestered loveliness, was about five miles in circumference,

and appeared to be scarcely less abundantly supplied with fish than the well-stocked ponds. At its upper extremity were two large cedar-trees, which, according to tradition, had been originally brought from the Holy Land, and planted by one of the Hungerfords on his return from the first Crusade. Standing out in sharp and dark relief against the sun, which was setting behind them, they imparted a solemn Oriental character to that portion of the view, and, as they threw their broad and long shadows over the waters, seemed to be stationed where they stood as the giant guardians of the little Eden that lay outspread before them. Upon the rushy bank of the Mere, immediately below the mansion, was a game of swans, as it was then termed, being an establishment of hutches and enclosures for rearing and breeding those stately birds, nearly one hundred of which were seen floating about the spot, the fanning air drifting up the light snow of their plumage as they sidled proudly away, or looked askant with a bridling and graceful consciousness of their own fair shadows reflect-

ed in the pellucid mirror of the lake. Lower down, upon the same side of the Mere, was a game of herons, which were seen stalking along in such numbers as to darken the banks which they explored for fish, and lifting up their long legs with as stately a step as if they disdained to tread upon earth. So tame and sleek were the birds, beasts, and fishes of all sorts, that they did not suggest the idea of being destined to the use of man, or of looking upon him as their enemy ; but rather that they were in a chartered sanctuary, where it was their privilege to fatten and grow old in the enjoyment of existence, until its natural termination should arrive.

Notwithstanding the number and variety of its animal tenants, a deep serene silence reigned over the whole manor ; for the waters were motionless, the winds were hushed, the cows were busy at their clover, the sheep were panting in the shade, the smaller birds were retiring to roost, and the large flocks of white pigeons which were still careering round and round above the building were at too great a height to allow the

flapping of their wings to be heard. If the leaves were now and then rustled with a passing breath from the lake, it seemed as if the twilight were enfolding the scenery in its arms, and hushing nature to sleep ; and this temporary cessation of the silence did but add to the intensity of the subsequent repose. Attached to the Manor House was a small chantry, which the embowering trees had prevented Dudley from discovering ; and in the midst of the serenity and stillness he was startled by the deep, solemn, sonorous voices of the monks chanting the even-song, whose sound floated mellowly along the waters to be lost in the surrounding woods. The swans turned themselves half round, and held their heads on one side as if listening to the strain, while the deer drew back their antlers from the paling and retreated several paces : but as the notes died away, they again slowly advanced, snuffing up the air with their timorous nostrils ; and the feathered monarchs of the lake pursued their course with a still more majestic stateliness, as if indignant at its momentary interruption.

Truly, said Dudley to himself, I might have surmised, without this holy chant, that I was gazing upon some Abbey Manor; for the monks are ever well bestowed, and fail not to entrench themselves in all the fatness of the earth. Though spoken reproachfully, his remark conveyed an encomium rather than a censure; for in these Glastonbury meads, as at Crowland, Hales Owen, and other places, the monks, by the patient labour of years and the unstinted application of the funds at their command, had drained, and dug, and planted, converting watery wastes into teeming meadows, and deserts into gardens, until wheresoever they established themselves, “a paradise was opened in the wild.”

While he stood contemplating the scene before him, now beginning gradually to deepen into the sober purple of twilight, a powerful bass-voice suddenly dispelled the silence by singing a merry monkish canticle; and, on looking in the direction of the sound, he beheld his acquaintance, Friar Frank, watering the flowers in a small garden between the gate-house and

the porch of the mansion, which was in a state of the highest and neatest cultivation. "Salve!" he exclaimed as Dudley approached, again imparting to his fine voice the more solemn tone used in the church-service; and then continued with a cheerful familiarity, "Ha! my son of the slough, my knight—not of King Arthur's round table, but of his deep quagmire—quomodo vales, how farest thou?"

"Let me not interrupt you, good father," said Dudley; "for I know that men of your order have few recreations, and none perhaps so soothing to the heart as that of rearing a little progeny of flowers."

"It is said that we have no domestic joys, my son; but, by the holy rood, there be few have larger families than he who considers the whole neighbourhood as his children."

"From what I have observed," resumed Dudley, "I may well vouch for your being the father of all those who need a parent's kindly aid."

"And here is another family," continued the friar, pointing to his flowers, "that mother

Earth hath brought me ; and right heartily do I love them, for a handsomer or more united race never blessed a father's care. Here be some of York and Lancaster, red roses and white, entwined together as fondly as if, like our gracious King, they sprang from one united stem. Here be French marygolds, to whom our English bees shall sing a peaceful song ; and though they may have a tustle together for the prize of honey, they shall part good friends, for, by the mass, these quiet borders be not like that 'twixt Calais and Boulogne. Where shall ye find coxcombs and columbines so comely and so innocent as these, which dance together in the wind, and kiss one another with lips which (*benedictum sit nomen Domini!*) can utter nothing but fragrance ? What royals or nobles so rich and bright as yonder golden-rods ? and where shall ye find musk or civet perfume so sweet as that of the eglantines and honeysuckles, jessamines, and gilliflowers, which all breathe their fragrance at once over this little modicum of earth ?"

"In sooth, father, you have a well-trimmed

garden, and a goodly, with rare flowers, that do credit to your husbandry."

"Here be pansies," continued the friar, too much interested in his hortulan riches to notice Dudley's speech, "whose culture shall give you the heart's-ease that grows in the bosom; balsams that shall better purge melancholy than if you had sailed to Anticyra for the mind-healing hellebore; poppies, whose training and watering shall ensure you sounder sleep than the swallowing of their juice; and, if you would rather feed the palate than the eye, on yonder bank be strawberries, such as the Bishop of Ely never equalled in his famed garden of Holborn."

"They are indeed most excellent," said Dudley, gathering some, "and better to my taste, this sultry evening, than your fairest roses."

"And yet, when these flowers have regaled mine eye until they pass away," resumed the friar, they may still minister to my palate, for here are my little winged confectioners, (he pointed to a double range of hives, around .

which the bees were thickly clustering,) who are preserving the sunshine and the dew of every blossom for my winter's repast."

"I marvel much," said Dudley, "how you find time, amid your many avocations, to keep your flowers in such a dainty trim."

"When it is my turn to sing at the Mere, I prune, and train, and water them as best I may, and by St. Benedict, the holy founder of our order, it would not mislike me to do perpetual duty in the chantry, that so I might make this garden my own little oratory; and while the birds and bees sang anthems to me, and the flowers threw up incense from every chalice, I might sit among them, and look upwards on a nobler roof than was ever reared by man over abbey or cathedral, even upon the blue vault of heaven, and pray silently with my thoughts to Him who is throned above it. But eheu! and hei mihi! my son, this may not be: we have busier duties to perform, more urgent, if not better, claims upon our time and service. And this reminds me of our last interview, and to ask what makes you here, and how fares the

hawk, the doomed man, the devil-sold and accursed King of the Hill?"

Dudley gave him to understand in a few words that he had quarrelled desperately with the knight, and that in an encounter of swords his life had only been saved by the intervention of Beatrice. "Holy St. Mary!" ejaculated the friar, "didst thou not make him swear the oath of the trial by battle? and hast thou repeated after matin and evening song, 'A cœcitate cordis libera nos, Domine?'"

"Sorry am I to confess, good father, that there was no time for the one, and that I forgot the other; but to make amends I promise to meet you in the abbey, whenever you will appoint, that we may sing together 'Hosanna in excelsis!' for my escape."

Friar Frank groaned aloud, and then resuming the tone of levity and monkish Latinism, which the enthusiasm excited by his garden had for the moment banished, exclaimed, "My son, my son, did I not bid you 'ware the hawk? 'Machinari est aliquot, sed dum revolvit tot et tot, Dominus suus est Astarot.' Great he is and

all-powerful, but the day will come when the devil will let loose his hand in this world, in order to clutch it for ever in the next. The King of the Hill will have to lay down his proud and impious head in the dust, and if it should be my lot to pronounce the ‘pulverem pulveri, cinerem cineri,’ and to write his epitaph, I would first exclaim, ‘Ne scribam vanum, duc mihi, Christe, manum ;’ and then would I inscribe upon his tombstone,

‘*Hic jacet a canker’d knave:
Beckebub his soul save !*’

“But, Deus misereatur nobis! he yet lives, and you jeopard your life, my son, every moment that you stay in these parts: you are the first that has escaped his sword, and it will be a miracle indeed if you stumble not into the traps and pitfalls, nor get snared in the toils, which he will be sure to set for you whichever way you turn; for he never forgives, and seldom fails to destroy, his enemy. What is your purpose, and whither wend ye?”

“I had no settled aim, and knew not whether my feet were leading me, but my pur-

pose in these parts touches the worthy Abbot of Glastonbury, and I would fain consult him as to my future proceedings."

"A godly man he is and a good," said the friar, "and better guide thou canst not have."

"And if my danger in the neighbourhood of the Tor House be so pressing as you deem," replied Dudley, "I cannot too soon have access to him."

"He sleeps at his manor of Sharpham," resumed the friar: "but you will do well to betake yourself forthwith to the abbey as the safest refuge, where you will find good lodging for the night: and in the morning, after I have sung matins at the chantry, I will not fail to speed over, (thou knowest I am a sturdy walker,) and join thee." After giving him minute directions for finding his way, and assuring him that there were no sloughs to fall into, and but little excuse for walking into the lake, seeing that the full moon was just rising above its further boundary, he exclaimed, "Salve et vale!" and resumed his occupations in the little garden: while Dudley, having thanked him for his

friendly services, proceeded in the direction of the abbey, listening for some time to the friar, the sound of whose deep and mellow voice, as he chanted another monkish hymn, floated along in swelling cadences upon the water.

As he advanced beyond the reach of the strain, which had derived a strange solemnity from the hour and the solitariness of the scene, his thoughts reverted to the occurrences at Tor House, and his resentment having now in some degree subsided, while the humiliation of his defeat was alleviated by the conviction that it was produced by supernatural agency, he dwelt with complacency upon the recollection of Beatrice's critical interference, to which the preservation of his life was solely to be attributed. It flattered his pride to believe that the impassioned energy, she had displayed, sprung from a warmer feeling than mere commiseration ; and his own gratitude for the vital service she had rendered, kindled his previous admiration into a more ardent sentiment, though he could not but be aware that their mutual attachment, if such indeed it was, had not commenced

under any very auspicious circumstances, and was still less likely to lead to any fortunate result.

Had he been more of a lover he would hardly have failed, as he paced the shore of the lake, to sympathize more deeply with the moon, whose full orb, throwing along the waters a bar of rippling light that terminated at his feet, seemed to place him in communion, almost in contact, with the queen of the night, and to afford him a medium along which he might waft his wishes from earth to heaven, and implore the aid of a goddess who has ever been considered favourable to mortals crossed in love. Such fancies, however, were not congenial to the fashion of his mind, and it was more on account of the *detour* it would occasion, than the loss of this accompanying ray, that he regretted the intervention of a narrow creek, which, running some distance inland to meet a little water-course, compelled him to turn away from the mere. At its extremity was a grove of oak, maple, and hazel, which he had nearly reached, when a figure,

emerging from the trees, and advancing towards him with a swaggering air, cried out in a harsh voice, which he immediately recognized for that of Captain Basset—

“Troll on away, troll on away,
Sing heave and howe, rombelowe, troll on away!”

“What, my gallant cock of the dunghill, my nimble-footed ruffler, my fierce runaway, have I found you; and retreating towards the Abbey as I suspected? By the foot of Pharaoh, you have held me a smoking chace this hot evening, and but that I have forsown water, I could set my mouth to the mere, and rob the fishes of their white ale for want of better liquor. Hast left nothing unfinished at the Tor House? taken nothing away that does not belong to thee?”

“Nor one, nor t’other, sirrah,” replied Dudley, who saw that he was more than half intoxicated, and suspected that it was his aim to pick a quarrel, perhaps for the purpose of engaging his attention, while others might start from the trees to assail him at the same time.

“Nay, you pass me not,” cried the captain,

swearing the Englishman's oath*, for I tell you, spite of your stout denial, that you have left behind you an unfinished quarrel with my noble

* The author has endeavoured to be as little offensive as possible in introducing the oaths and imprecations which were at this period in such familiar usage. Indeed the revolting habit of swearing has been a distinguished characteristic of the English for many centuries, and the national adjuration which has given us a nickname upon the Continent, appears to have prevailed at an earlier period than is generally supposed. "The English," says Dr. Henry, "were remarkable in this period, (between 1399 and 1485) among the nations of Europe, for the absurd and impious practice of profane swearing in conversation. The Count of Luxemburg, accompanied by the Earls of Warwick and Stafford, visited the Maid of Orleans in her prison at Rouen, where she was chained to the floor and loaded with irons; the Count, who had sold her to the English, pretended that he had come to treat with her about her ransom. Viewing him with just resentment and disdain, she cried—' Begone ! you have neither the power to ransom me.' Then turning her eyes towards the two Earls, she said—' I know that you English are determined to put me to death, and imagine that after I am dead you will conquer France. But though there were a hundred thousand G— Dam'mees more in France than there are, they will never conquer that kingdom.' So early had the English got this odious nickname, by their too frequent use of that horrid imprecation."

master, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, and have taken away a life that does not belong to you—namely, your own, which was justly forfeited: wherefore, by fire and blood, and cup and cannikin, and rapier, and rosa solis, you must let the moon smell your cold iron, and wind up the account with me, honest Ben Basset, his soldado and his forlado. What! shall a gallant knight, who rides with furs and footcloth, be bearded in his own house by a Frenchified poppinjay? Draw, thou base Besagnio!"

Unsheathing his weapon as he spoke, he planted himself in the middle of the path, but Dudley, who considered such an antagonist quite beneath his anger, and perceived moreover that he was in no condition for the combat, contented himself with saying "Harkee, saucy and drunken groom! if you wish not to carry for some days the mark of my sword-belt upon your shoulders, you will stand aside and give me way, for my purposes are urgent, and I will not be letted by any such red-lattice swaggerer."

" You huff it well, Monsieur Dudley, but by

cock and pye, I'll make you tame as a blackbird in a great frost. Your French jacket shall be slashed, and pointed, and drilled, even worse than it is; for I have sworn to let the moonlight take a peep under your ribs with this my trusty Toledo ; my rumble down, tumble down, hey go, now, now."

He advanced nearer, brandishing his weapon in a menacing manner ; but Dudley, still retaining his composure, resumed : "Once more I warn you, as you value your life, not to move another step ; for, unless you wield a charmed sword, like your miscreant employer, you will find to your cost that you have to deal with one who is no mean master of his art."

"Why, what a bragging coistril art thou, Master Dudley ! hast taken lessons abroad at rapier and dagger, and learnt the *imboccata*, and the *stoccata*, and the *passata*, and the *punto-reverso*? It matters not an' thou hast, for I am honest Ben Basset, who, without knowing the name of the thrust, can bore a hole for every button on his adversary's jacket ; so draw, draw, thou craven, or I spit thee like

a lark, with my hey nonny no, pipe tirlye, tirlowe."

As he was by this time within two or three paces' distance, flourishing his weapon as if determined to attempt the execution of his threats, Dudley hastily snatched his sword from the scabbard, intending, if possible, to disarm his opponent; for he was too generous to meditate any serious injury against a man fighting under such a manifest want of self-possession. But he was not able to effect his purpose so harmlessly as he intended, for in the second pass the point of his sword, slipping over the hilt of his adversary's, ran him completely through the upper part of the right arm; and the captain, reeling backwards and dropping his weapon, exclaimed, "Dags and dagonets! the foul evil befall thy pestilent steel! it has let moonlight into my shoulder. Whew! who would think that hot blood could spirit from so cold a wound? A murrain upon thy French thrusting! I shall not be able of a month to wield Bilboa, or clink cup and can, and shall have nought to do but sing 'Troll on away,' sing——

zooks; what a rascal twinge shoots down to my elbow!"

Apprehensive of some new assault or treacherous ambuscade, Dudley snapped his adversary's sword in half, and thought it prudent to make the best of his way through the little grove; which he did without regarding the clamorous exclamations of the captain, who, with a variety of abusive epithets, called after him to return, offering to fight him with his left-hand, and threatening him with all sorts of future vengeance, if he refused to comply with his request. Dudley kept his sword unsheathed until he had passed through the gloom of the trees, which he did unmolested, when, upon regaining the open banks of the lake, now irradiated by the full splendour of the moon, he returned it to its scabbard, and hastily pursued his way, taking the recent attack as an earnest of the active and malignant hostility, which he was now to expect from Sir Lionel. Basset, it was obvious, had been immediately dispatched to dog and waylay him; and it was probably owing to the half-sober compunction of the

agent, which, in the midst of his ruffianism, made him prefer an open scuffle to an assassination, rather than to any boggling in the instructions of his employer, that he might attribute his present escape. Two attempts upon his life in so short a space of time convinced him that there would be little security for his existence, so long as he remained in the vicinity of an enemy, who was as active and relentless in pursuing his revenges, as he was formidable in the means of enforcing them ; and he resolved accordingly, if his intentions should be approved by the abbot, to proceed to London, where he had connections of rank and influence, and try whether their united power, reinforced by the strong arm of the law, and perhaps by the interference of the monarch himself, should it be deemed advisable to claim it, would not be sufficient to procure the emancipation of his cousin, and prove an overmatch for the usurping, audacious King of the Hill, in spite of his plots and stratagems, his numerous banditti-like retainers, and even of his unholy alliances.

Wrapped in cogitations of this nature, he pursued his way at a brisk pace towards Glastonbury, until, on ascending a gentle eminence, he beheld the shaded side of the venerable abbey, rearing its stupendous and irregular mass against the moon-lighted sky, more like one of those colossal fabrics of the imagination, which we trace in the broken outline of the evening clouds, than any structure which it was possible for human hands to have piled up. Its lofty towers and pinnacles, as they caught the bright ray which was intercepted below by the body of the building, looked like baseless columns hanging in the sky; while the light which was admitted into the interior of the great church, gleaming here and there indistinctly through the windows of its opposite and darkened side, just broke the dim mass sufficiently to show the prodigious extent of the whole range. No sound was heard, no object was seen to move; the very elements that surrounded it seemed to be hushed and awe-stricken; and when Dudley, penetrated by a reverential feeling which all nature appeared to

share, arrived at the porter's lodge, and pulled the bell, he could hardly help fancying, as he listened to its deep sullen echoes, that there was a degree of profanation in thus dispelling the silence that had invested the sacred building.

The monks within had already betaken themselves to repose ; the abbot, he was informed, as indeed he had been previously told by Friar Frank, was at the manor of Sharpham ; but on stating that he came to him on urgent business, he was shown into a small neatly-appointed bed-chamber, of which there were many set apart for the use of occasional visitants, where the fatigue of his long walk and previous exertions soon enabled him to forget the agitation of his mind, in a profound and uninterrupted sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

What abbot could be found throughout
The realm, more learned, good, devout,
 Better or brighter?
Blameless he ran his godly race,
Conferring sanctity and grace
 E'en on the mitre.

ARISING early the following morning, Dudley employed his time, before the arrival of the abbot, in wandering about the building, of which, upon his previous visit, he had seen no portion but the great church, and that only in a hurried and imperfect manner. To this solemn and sublime scene he again bent his steps, walking amid the tombs, and over the grave-stones of the departed great, whose illustrious names seemed to hallow and ennoble the spot; or pacing along the dim and lofty aisles,

where the very silence seemed to be holily praying, and his footfall, gentle as it was, to be an interruption of its devotions. Having more leisurely surveyed the unrivalled architectural beauties and rich decorations of the place, and spent some time in decyphering the Norman tiles of the floor, inscribed with scripture-sentences in Latin, and the names of various kings and benefactors, he visited in succession the chapels of St. Mary, St. Andrew, of our Lady of Loretto, of the Holy Sepulchre, and of St. Edgar, in the latter of which was the venerable tomb of the king who had given his name to the building. All the others were enriched with sumptuous monuments of brass or marble, erected to the memory of monarchs, queens, abbots, warriors, statesmen, and noble dames of the olden time, who little thought, when they ordered their remains to be deposited in this solid sanctuary, that the walls, which time would have spared for numerous ages, should be torn prematurely down by man; that the beasts of the field should make a kennel of their desecrated graves; and that the hands of sacrilegi-

ous avarice, disturbing even their bones, should scatter them to the fowls of the air, as they rifled the coffins of their ornaments, or turned up the earth beneath them in search of buried treasure.

From this spot he strolled to the inhabited part of the establishment, leaving the King's Lodgings, as they were termed, with those of the abbot and friars, unvisited, and passed through the farmerer's office, the jubiler's office, the friary, and the almoner's apartments, until he came to a lofty arched door, secured with nails, bosses, and bars of iron, which, turning heavily on its hinges as he pushed it open, admitted him into a room, that he little expected to find, in so peaceful an establishment, being no other than a spacious armoury, abundantly provided with swords, spear, arquebusses, bullets, and other warlike apparatus. Most of these weapons, appearing by their fashion to be of great antiquity, had probably been provided during the wars of the Roses and previous periods of trouble, when the church-militant found the halbert and the battle-axe a better

security for its possessions than the episcopal crosier, or even than the papal bull, though wrapped in lead and sealed with the Fisherman's Seal. For many years the spider, affording an emblem of security and peace, which might well atone for the dusty negligence that it implied, had been suffered to weave festoons over the mouths of the guns, and hang like garlands upon points and blades that had once been reddened with human gore; and indeed the apartment itself, from the time of Perkyn Warbeck's insurrection, had been as a Temple of Janus during peace. But since Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice had taken possession of the Tor House,—a man who avowed an implacable enmity to the abbot, who was known to be ready for any desperate enterprize, and whose numerous armed retainers were always kept prepared for its execution,—it had been deemed a measure of precaution to furbish up the rusty weapons, and re-establish the order of the armoury, that the abbot might be enabled to repel any sudden surprize or nocturnal assault from so formidable a neighbour.

Quitting this uncongenial department of the religious edifice, he traversed the wardrobe, the still-house, the doctor's and the bishop's apartments, the oaken gallery, the cloisters, in which several of the monks and officers of the establishment were pacing to and fro, and entered the great hall to the south, which was about forty yards long and twenty broad, the whole of the upper end being hung with a magnificent piece of arras, of the richest colours and most exquisite design and workmanship. After admiring this choicest production of the Flemish looms, he crossed the broad court, nearly five hundred feet in length, and entered the scriptorium, where eight or ten monks, and as many writers belonging to the abbey, were already at their desks, copying, transcribing, or digesting ancient tracts, historical chronicles, chartularies, and literary treasures of all sorts, both ancient and modern, ecclesiastical and civil. From this apartment he passed by a large double-door into the spacious and lofty library, not less astonished at its great extent than at the innumerable books and manuscripts that it con-

tained, piled up from the floor to the ceiling ; though it is probable his emotion did not equal that of old Leland, who declares, that at the sight of such an unequalled collection of the rarest, most precious, and sacred remains of antiquity, he was struck with such a reverential awe and amazement, that he drew back astounded at the view, and hesitated for some time to pass the threshold. Here were preserved the classical treasures in Greek and Latin, which, but for such careful custody, and the pains taken in the copying and collation of ancient manuscripts, would never have descended to our times ; here were accumulated, and in a great measure composed, the materials which have supplied an inexhaustible reservoir for all subsequent historians ; and here was furnished a ready answer to the question so often and so tauntingly put—“ How did the lazy monks employ themselves ? ” When their architectural, agricultural, and literary labours are considered, whatever objections may be urged against the monastic institution, in a religious or political point of view, it can hardly be main-

tained that its members were such absolute drones in the national hive, as they have been sometimes too inconsiderately termed.

Hear it not, ye members of the Roxburgh Club, when we declare, that rare and unique as were these treasures of the olden time, they excited less interest in Dudley than the old-fashioned weapons of the armoury, to which he was about to return, when he was accosted by a venerable silver-headed servant in the abbot's livery, who informed him that his lordship was arrived, and as soon as prayers were over would attend him in the parlour, to which he was accordingly escorted. It was a small Gothic apartment, the sides pannelled with dark-coloured oak of rude carving, but the roof of vaulted masonry, the arches springing from grotesque heads of no very inviting physiognomy, and terminating in little squat monsters that looked down from the ceiling with an equally forbidding expression. A large antique arm-chair, which, by its cushions, seemed to be appropriated to the abbot, who was old and infirm, was carved at the back with figures that

could hardly have been expected in such a situation, being an assemblage of devils dancing with great apparent glee, although the moral sculptor had cunningly contrived, by introducing some curling flames beneath them, to show that they could not thus indulge themselves with impunity. On the table amid books and papers lay a papal bull, which had apparently been left open for consultation, and, as Dudley had never seen one of these instruments, he examined it, and was reading aloud its commencement—"Innocentius Episcopus, servus servorum Dei, dilectis filiis Abbatii et Conventui Sanctæ Mariæ Glastoniæ, Bathoniensis diocesis, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. In Dei nomine, Amen!"—when, as he uttered the last words, they were repeated in a low voice behind him, and looking round, he beheld the abbot, to whom he bowed respectfully, and apologized for the liberty he had taken.

"Alas, my son!" replied the venerable man, "there be greater liberties than these taken now-a-days with the edicts of the Holy Father; and there be few in our dark and evil times,

that have the grace to make excuse for much less warrantable bearing, nay, even for open and audacious denial of their authority. God's will be done in all things! Stand not, my son; —I pray thee, now, be seated. In mine office, or in the temple of the Lord, my duty bids me exact all the state that may do honour to my ministry; but here I am Richard Whiting, no longer Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, but a sinner like thyself, and, as thou seest, a feeble and infirm old man."—He sunk slowly, and with apparent pain, into his cushioned chair. Dudley seated himself opposite to him; and the abbot, too much impressed with his own sickly and precarious state to advert immediately to the purport of his visitant, continued—"Yea, truly, my son, pride in the spirit were but in me an idle mockery of the humbled and waning flesh; for I am hastening to the grave, where the scull that wore the mitre or the crown shall be encircled with the worm, and the hand that carried the crosier or the sceptre shall grasp the dust; for the deepest grave and the fairest monument is but as the vain enthronement of a

nauseous skeleton ; and such will shortly be all the grandeur and the state of the Lord Abbot of Glastonbury ; ‘ *cursum consummavi! cursum consummavi!* ’—For a minute or two he remained gazing upon his crossed hands, apparently lost in solemn though resigned reflections, when, rousing himself from his reverie, he said, as he lifted his eyes to Dudley, “ Pardon me, my son, if an old man who feels that he has deeper concern with the next world than with this, has suffered his thoughts to wander awhile heaven-ward ; and tell me, I pray thee, what is thine errand here, and how may I best serve thee ? ”

In as concise a manner as possible, his visitant related to him the dying orders of Sir Giles Hungerford for the removal of Cecil to the abbey, his own adventures at the Tor House, his conviction that the imbecility imputed to his cousin was a calumny invented for the most nefarious purposes, his suspicion of the dark designs of Sir Lionel, who, having usurped the estates, appeared resolved to maintain them by the secret imprisonment, perhaps by the mur-

der, of the rightful heir; and concluded his statement by requesting his counsel and advice as to the best mode of proceeding, for procuring the emancipation of his cousin, and avoiding the formidable hostility, with which he himself might expect to be relentlessly assailed by his treacherous guardian. At the first mention of Sir Lionel's name, the abbot had repeatedly crossed himself with considerable agitation, exclaiming, when the relation was concluded—“A fearful man he is, my son, and an evil—guileful and wily as the serpent; one who delighteth in darkness, and his hand is acquainted with blood. He is the Belial that has profaned the Temple of the Lord, and made the sacred symbols fall prostrate; the Baal and the Ashtaroth who hath idolatrous priests, and demandeth human sacrifices. But though the Satan to whom he hath sold himself may prosper for a while his hellish schemes, the Holy One whom we serve, the God of St. Benedict, our pious founder, will confound his devices, and he shall lie prostrate, even as the great Dagon when the Ashdodites rose in the morning, and behold!

Dagon fallen, his face to the earth, before the face of the ark of Jehovah!"

In referring to the Scripture, he had unconsciously slipped into the Latin language, though we have given the passage in its English version.

"And how, my lord," inquired Dudley, "may we best defeat his machinations, and deliver my unhappy cousin from the danger with which he is menaced, if indeed it have not already crushed him?"

"Though the demons that minister unto him have, as I am told, guided the lightning to my grange, and burnt it to the ground," said the abbot, not noticing his question, "I will not lose my trust in Him who hath ever protected the abbey by his miraculous grace; in Him who smote Ananias and Sapphira, who caused the son of Hamadath to be hanged on a gibbet, while she was plotting the destruction of Mordecai, and Belshazzar to be slain for profaning the sacred vessels of the temple."—His face became animated with a pious fervour as he spoke, and he delivered himself, again using the Latin tongue,

with an energy that seemed hardly consistent with his previous debility. Observing, however, that he seemed not to have heard his question, Dudley repeated it; when the abbot replied in English, and in a calmer manner,— “Holy Saint Mary ! this is a weighty matter and a deep, and I may not hastily give an opinion, nor proffer counsel, without having first devoutly prayed for guidance and godly help. Before even-song this shall be done, and we will confer again ; but now I may not longer tarry, for it is Wednesday, on which and on the Friday morning, all the neighbouring poor betake themselves hither for relief of their worldly wants, as well as for such ghostly comfort as my exhortations, and prayers, and blessing, may impart unto them. Abide in these apartments, where thou mayest see the order of our little college, and ere long, when the poor have been cared for, and I have besought heavenly aid in my private oratory, thou shalt again have speech of me. Meanwhile the blessing of Saint Benedict be with thee !” So saying, he quitted the parlour, and the silver-locked servant who had escorted

Dudley thither again making his appearance, and declaring that he had been ordered to accompany him over the establishment, they quitted the room together.

The abbot's apartments, as they were modestly designated, formed in fact a suite of spacious halls, chambers, and buildings, which constituted at once a college and a little court, whose admirable arrangement, perfect discipline, and polished manners, had long served as a model for the whole kingdom. Hither were sent from all parts the sons of the nobility and gentry, not only to receive a virtuous and learned education, but to be instructed in every polite accomplishment. Above three hundred had been thus bred up by the present abbot, besides many others of inferior rank, whom he had fitted for the universities. His table, with his numerous attendants and officers, exhibiting a well-ordered and plenteous hospitality, without any unnecessary luxury or ostentation, were admired by every visitant; and such were the extent and regulation of his domestic offices, that he had been known to entertain five hun-

dred persons of distinction at a time, without difficulty or embarrassment. When he went abroad he had sometimes above a hundred attendants in his train, yet while he submitted to all these state-observances; as the appendages of his office, there was not personally a more meek, lowly, and humble-minded individual, than the powerful Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, a member of the Upper House of Convocation, and a parliamentary baron regularly summoned by writ to sit “inter pares, proceres, et barones regni.”

Just as he had completed the survey of the establishment, accompanied by his ancient guide, and was crossing the Broad Court, Dudley was startled by the sound of horses’ feet advancing towards him at a rapid pace. Upon turning round he beheld Pierre, mounted on a stout gelding, with the valise at his back, who singing as he saw his master, pulled up his horse :—

“ Scais tu bien, mon cher camarade,
Pourquoi la femme est sans barbe au menton ?
Elle parle tant-tant, tant-tant, tant-tant,
Qu’on n’eut pu la rasersans quelque estafileade.”

And “pardi, monsieur,” he continued address-

ing his master and rubbing his chin, “ I have the same excuse for not having shaven this morning ; for ever since daylight I have been talking and scolding to get myself and Monsieur’s valise safe out of the clutches of yonder *scelerat*, at the Tor House. *Vrai nom de Dieu !* we have no such *mauvais sujets* in France.” In answer to Dudley’s inquiries, he proceeded to state, that he had no sooner learnt his fracas with Sir Lionel, and his departure from the Tor House,—circumstances of which he had remained in ignorance until Captain Bassett’s arrival at a late hour on the previous night,—than he had availed himself of the first dawn of light to pack up the valise, with the intention of following him to the abbey, to which place the captain had reported his flight. The servants, however, to whom he had first applied for assistance, were so far, when they were made acquainted with the state of the case, from tendering him any aid, that they began to confabulate together as to the propriety of detaining him, until Sir Lionel’s pleasure could be known ; and concurring in the prudence of this

step they had actually locked him up in the stables while they went for instructions. Scarcely had they done so, when a trumpet sounded, and other voices were heard announcing that Sir Lionel, in furious wrath at the defeat and serious wound of the captain, had ordered all his household and retainers to arm themselves and assemble in the Great Hall without delay, intending, as it was thought, to make an attack upon the abbey, and attempt the recovery of the fugitive by main force. Not by any means relishing this posture of affairs, Pierre applied himself to the door at the opposite extremity of the stables, which had been fortunately left unsecured, and finding the coast clear, selected the stoutest gelding he could find, led it to the spot where he had left the valise, and strapping it hastily upon the horse's back, mounted before it, determining to escape if possible by a nimble *coup de main*. In the general confusion of the moment he passed along unnoticed, or at least unobstructed; at the Gate-house they were but imperfectly acquainted with the cause of the confusion; they had received no orders to

prevent his egress ; and he accordingly sallied forth from the enemy's quarters, and clapping spurs to his horse, as soon as he was indifferent to the suspicions which his speed might excite, had presently galloped into the broad court of the abbey.

Accustomed to predatory warfare long enough to consider every thing fair booty, he now patted his steed on the neck, and exclaimed, with a look of self-gratulation at his exploit, “ Monsieur will admit that this stout gelding is no bad prize for the beginning of hostilities ; the valise contains at least every thing that belongs to us ; and if there be a trifle or two more, morbleu ! how can one help it, when they oblige you to collect your baggage in such a hurry ?”

During this narrative, several of the monks, surprised at the sight of such an unusual apparition within the walls of the abbey, had formed a circle round him, offering a singular contrast, by their grave dress and saturnine physiognomies, to the gay foreign costume, olive complexion, gold ear-rings, comic expression, and laughter-twinkling eyes of the Frenchman, who

had now dismounted, and disclosed his white teeth as he looked smirkingly and briskly around. Observing their amazement, he clapped his hands together, and at the same time shouted out, "*Hanneton! vole, vole, vole!*" so suddenly, that several of them started back in some dismay, apparently doubting the perfect sanity of their vivacious visitant. Ere they could recover from their alarm, he seized the most solemn-looking of the party by the hands, and pointing out his own toe like a dancing-master, while he drew back his head, and arched up his black brows till they threw a succession of wrinkles to the very top of his sunburnt forehead, he began tenderly humming a French dance, and whirled his involuntary partner round and round in a species of slow waltz, of which he executed his own portion with considerable grace and great apparent enjoyment; while the monk, keeping at arms-length from him, as if he were in the grasp of a madman, stared in his face with a look of utter amazement, not unmixed with a slight degree of horror.

"How now, saucy sirrah!" cried Dudley angrily—"what mean you by this fool's gear and monkey's antics? Are these godly men to be as lightly entreated, as if you were still romping with the gossips at the Tables; and is this a moment for your Tom o'Bedlam freaks, when, if you be not a false-spoken knave, we may look to have the cracking of arquebusses to attend to, instead of your mistimed pranks?"

"*Dame! Monsieur, c'est le moment même—* there's no time to lose in making use of the foot, when there's a chance we may be presently knocked on the head; and as for this respectable, fat monk"—he chucked him familiarly under the chin as he spoke—"though he looks so like a solemn sir and a sullen, he has a decided genius for the art, and in three weeks, under my care, he should dance you a hornpipe à ravir; so look not so glum, good father—*Eh Palsangué Pierrot, boutte bas ton chagrin.*"

"Silence! once more, thou malapert knave," cried Dudley, in a still more authoritative voice, "or thy shoulders shall be switched with thine

own riding-staff, till thou singest another-gaines ditty."

" Domine, fiat pax !" chanted Father Frank in a deep voice, that drowned every other, and presently joining the assemblage, and learning the report made by Pierre as to the hostile preparations at the Tor House, he drew Dudley aside, and assured him there was no ground for apprehension, as Sir Lionel, although he might pretend to be carried away by a momentary wrath, was much too crafty and calculating an adversary to commit himself by any open attack upon the abbey, especially where there was so little probability of his succeeding. The lofty walls, he said, by which they were surrounded, secured them from a surprise; the numbers within more than doubled any that their adversary could muster; neither arms nor ammunition were wanting; and it was likely that, in this instance, as in previous demonstrations of the same sort, Sir Lionel was more desirous to keep his people on the alert, and ascertain their fidelity, than to undertake an attack, in which, even if he succeeded, he

would only be exposing himself to the certain vengeance of the law. It was agreed, therefore, while they ordered the outer-gates of the abbey to be kept rigorously shut, and appointed scouts to watch the proceedings at the Tor House, who might give an immediate alarm should a sortie be made in any force, that nothing should be said upon the subject to the abbot, whose precarious health and shattered nerves little qualified him to support the shock of any such alarming intelligence.

Scarcely had they formed this resolution, when the dinner-hour was announced by the ringing of a large bell, and Dudley accompanied Friar Frank into the refectory, where the tables were spread out for a numerous company. According to established usage, the abbot sate by himself at a small elevated table, approached by twelve steps, divided into three stages, at every one of which the monks who brought him his dinner in silver dishes, stopped to sing a short hymn, a state-observance which effectually secured him from all danger of burning his mouth with the viands. At the visitants' table

were several poor gentlemen, as they were termed, who, if they happened to be of kin with any of the founders or benefactors of the abbey, or from the mere circumstance of their gentle blood, claimed a right of free-lodging and entertainment for a certain number of days, at the expiration of which they generally shifted their quarters to some other religious establishment, until these vagabond paupers of the aristocracy had eaten their way from one end of the kingdom to the other. Not much coveting the society of such gentry,—who, notwithstanding their penniless pouches, were generally notorious gluttons and epicures, ever comparing the entertainment of one abbey or monastery with another, and calling about them with as much arrogance as if they thought their high birth would atone for their low manners,—Dudley betook himself to a lower table, and obtained a seat next to his friend Friar Frank. Several of the students, he observed, were eager to procure places round about him, a circumstance which he attributed to the cheerful familiarity of his manners upon all occasions;

but he presently discovered that the good friar possessed attractions for the junior portion of the establishment, which had endeared his society to them as much as his frank and friendly good sense had ingratiated him with the majority of the seniors. Latin being the only language allowed to be spoken during the meal, he had a store of rhyming couplets, quirks, quiddits, and riddles in that language, to which his young auditors listened with an egregious glee. This was increased when the attendants, who had just scholarship enough to know the Latin names of the different articles they were usually called on to supply, were asked by him for bread, beer, or trenchers, in such periphrastic terms as rendered his wants sufficiently clear to the students, though they completely eluded the comprehension of the servants, and left them sometimes staring with a bewildered look, sometimes attempting to evince their acuteness by eagerly supplying the wrong article, either of which contingencies afforded infinite amusement to the little circle that surrounded him. At times, however, he made known his wants,

in a natural language, that could not be misunderstood, imitating the noise made by pouring out wine from a long-necked leathern bottle, when he required the little modicum of that beverage which he allowed to himself; and looking up in the faces of the domestics, as they answered this appeal, with an imperturbable gravity, that rendered it impossible for them to control their risible tendencies.

The plain yet hospitable repast was soon ended, and after the grace had been chanted, in which Friar Frank's sonorous voice predominated, the company dispersed, some to their studies, and others to their various occupations. Scarcely had they separated when Dudley was again summoned to the abbot's parlour, where he found the venerable old man seated in his arm-chair.—“I have prayed for guidance, my son,” he exclaimed in a feeble voice, “and after pondering deeply, it seems best to me, that thou shouldst betake thyself to London forthwith, where thou wilt not only be safer from the machinations of thine enemy, but wilt have better chance to confound his devices, and deliver the

innocent from his snare. Thou shalt have two steeds from mine own stable, and here are letters that may serve thee right well. They are addressed to my singular good patron the Lord Cardinal, a righteous man and a great, who is not only the redeemer of the oppressed and the father of the fatherless, but has ample power to enforce the justice that he loves, and shall quickly pull down this audacious scorner from his chair. Yes, my son, even though he be leagued with the spirits of darkness, they shall fall prostrate before the spirits of the light and of the law, even as the magicians of Pharaoh sank down before the superior power of Moses."

He then read the letter, which gave a short outline of Sir Lionel's usurpation and misconduct, stated the strong suspicions that he meditated some atrocity against his ward, and referring to the bearer for more explicit information, concluded by earnestly recommending him to his lordship's all-powerful patronage. This letter he sealed in the presence of his visitor, and delivering it to him, urged him to lose no time in departing from the abbey, and with-

drawing himself from the secret snares or open violence, to which he would be infallibly exposed so long as he remained in the vicinity of the Tor House.

The advice thus given was so much in unison with his own wishes and sentiments, that Dudley expressed his readiness to depart without a moment's delay, although he could not quit the neighbourhood until he had visited the town of Glastonbury, for the purpose of suspending Sir Giles's helmet in the church, and giving orders for a suitable inscription, conformably to the dying orders of his uncle. "There also I can stead you well," said the abbot, "the living is in my gift, and the present incumbent was nominated by myself. A right worthy man he is, and a holy; whom you may safely trust with your directions, and I will be of warranty that he shall do your bidding." So saying, he extended his arms over him, and pronouncing a solemn benediction, recommending him to the special protection of St. Mary and St. Benedict, the patrons of the abbey, he bade him farewell. After having most fervently thanked him for his inter-

ference, Dudley quitted the parlour, and proceeded to summon Pierre, and take leave of Friar Frank, as well as to give instructions for sending back Sir Lionel's horse, a measure which its captor, or rather its purloiner, seemed to consider a piece of very fastidious and affected honesty. Having selected, however, a serviceable substitute from the abbot's stables, he became better reconciled to the loss of his prize ; Dudley mounted a stout roadster, and taking a most cordial leave of the good Friar Frank, whose powerful voice floated after them in a loud "*Salve et vale !*" to which Pierre replied, by singing, "*Allerte ! allerte ! allerte ! disoit Père Gregoire,*" they turned their backs to the abbey, and proceeded towards the town of Glastonbury.

Here, by the assistance of the clergyman, their business was soon dispatched. With a heavy heart, and thoughts that painfully reverted to the desperate battle of the adventurers, and the scene of his uncle's death at Montreuil, he drew forth the ominous helmet, and fixed it up with his own hands in a conspicuous part of the

church at Glastonbury, among the escutcheons, banners, and monuments of the family; while the good priest undertook to place an inscription beneath it to inform after-ages, conformably to the last wish of the deceased—"that there once lived such a knight as Sir Giles Hungerford of the Tor."

This duty being satisfactorily discharged, Dudley resumed his journey, in which he had made some progress, when, on looking back at the faint sound of a distant trumpet, he saw Sir Lionel's numerous retainers marching out of the gate-house in regular array, and could distinguish the gleaming of their weapons as they halted in front of the building. Judging from these appearances that he seriously meditated an attack upon the abbey, it was his first impulse to return, that he might assist in its defence; but a moment's reflection convincing him, that his absence was much more likely to prevent the threatened violence than his presence, and that his object would be better attained by proceeding to the capital than by lingering in Somersetshire, he clapped spurs to his horse,

and upon descending into a gentle valley, skirted on either side with wood, presently lost sight of the Tor House and the lawless band of Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice. Though the building, however, was shut out from view, his thoughts often reverted to Cecil, of whose fate he could not help entertaining the most sinister forebodings ; and they occasionally dwelt with more pleasant association upon the beautiful and stately Beatrice, for whom he felt the warmest gratitude, and whose spirited interference in his behalf, he was willing to attribute to a deep and tender interest in his fate.

CHAPTER VIII.

All find this automatic elf,
Who lives by line and rule himself,
Their worst tormentor ;
His household 's a machine, that moves
For ever in the self-same grooves,
On the same centre.

EVENTS that had absorbed all his attention, had succeeded one another with so much rapidity during his short visit at the Tor House, and what admiration he had to bestow upon female beauty had been so exclusively engrossed by Beatrice, that Dudley's thoughts had scarcely once reverted to the daughter of Sir Eustace Poyns. Although he himself had almost forgotten the circumstance, it will perhaps be recollected by the reader that he was formally betrothed to this young lady, and that he

had written to her father before he left France, announcing his intention of shortly visiting him; a meeting which, under the circumstances of the respective parties, and the rapidly approaching period fixed for the daughter's marriage, could hardly fail to agitate the fair residents at Beckhampton Hall, although it had almost escaped the recollection of the affianced bridegroom. His present journey allowed him abundant leisure for reflecting upon this engagement, and consulting the state of his feelings as to its fulfilment. During the first day's progress, indeed, he repeatedly imagined that he heard the discharge of arquebusses, and even fancied that he could distinguish the report of the great culverins with which he knew the abbey to be provided, sounds which directed all his thoughts to the probable result of the attack, and more than once occasioned him again to balance the propriety of turning back to assist in repelling the audacious and lawless assailant.. No sooner had these sounds died away, than his meditations were interrupted by the livelier strains of Pierre recommencing his

old ditty of “*Colin mangeant des artichaux*,” and endeavouring to cheer his master, whose pensive mood he had noticed, by reminding him that “*un cœur qui soupire est dans le délice*:” but at length the Gaul’s lungs or patience became exhausted; and as they prosecuted their journey in silence, his master was enabled to commune quietly with himself as to his future plans and prospects.

If he little liked the notion of having the formal and morose Sir Eustace Poyns for his father-in-law, the fierce, rapacious, and unhallored Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice was a still less desirable connexion. After what had passed between them already, to which further hostilities would doubtless be added, it was much more probable that the haughty and vindictive knight would accomplish his destruction, than that he should consent to any reconciliation, or ever acknowledge him as the husband of his daughter. Indeed, Dudley himself could not contemplate the possibility of such a measure, until he had seen his cousin fully righted and reinstated. Powerful, therefore, as had been

the impression made upon him by Beatrice's beauty, whose showy and striking figure was peculiarly attractive to one who considered a certain air of style and distinction indispensable in a female of rank, he felt the absolute necessity of subduing the nascent attachment, until circumstances should become more favourable for its developement. Ardent gratitude to her for the preservation of his life, he should ever entertain ; and to this he was compelled, for the present, to limit his sentiments. As to the meeting with his affianced wife, he looked forward to it with the greatest possible aversion, and would gladly have seized any plausible excuse for avoiding it ; Beckhampton Hall, however, lay directly in his route ; he had pledged himself to visit it on his arrival in England ; and if it became necessary to declare his determination not to complete the contract of marriage, the sooner this unpleasant explanation took place, the better would it be for all parties.

He rode forward, therefore, with the disheartening impression that he had a painful duty to perform, and that every hour and every

mile were bringing him nearer and nearer to an *eclaircissement*, which he would much rather have seen receding to a greater distance. A journey, accomplished under such feelings, appears to be doubly tedious ; for our wishes drag us backward, and the heart loses ground while the footsteps are gaining it. Nor was there anything in the scenery through which he passed to cheer him on. The country was thinly peopled and poorly cultivated, the few wretched hovels of the peasantry being only occasionally varied by some description of religious house, around which, as usual, the district assumed a fertile and smiling appearance ; the inns were wretched ; and the badness of the roads, fine as the season was, gave him an alarming presage of their winter state, and increased his impatience to escape from them.

Hardly knowing whether to rejoice that he had completed so much of his expedition, or to feel annoyed at the unpleasant process which he would be now obliged to go through, he at length approached Beckhampton Hall, whose environs were announced by well-trimmed hedges,

neat enclosures, and fields well stocked with cattle of all sorts. The projecting casemented windows of the old building, its pointed roofs and gables, fretted with copings and crowned with pinnacles of carved woodwork, its twisted chimneys of red brick, battlemented at the top, and the lofty belfry in the centre of the roof, were all that could be seen, the lower portion being hidden by the solid wall with which the house was surrounded. In the centre of this defence was a lodge or gate-house, approached through a long and gloomy avenue of elms, whose numerous tenantry of rooks seemed to declare by their harsh and apparently angry croaking, that they were little accustomed to be disturbed by the sound of a visitant's footfall, and formed but an inauspicious augury of the welcome that might be expected within the mansion itself. On his alighting, and entering the lodge, an ancient porter of rigid and repulsive aspect, in a livery of French tawney, with the badge of a peacock upon his shoulder, after having eyed him with a look of sour surprise, took down a dusty book, and furnishing him

with materials for writing, desired him to enter his name in the volume. "For what purpose?" inquired Dudley. "Because it is the order of Sir Eustace, without which no visitant can be admitted," was the reply, given in no very ingratiating tone. This form was accordingly complied with, when he thrust back the book, adding—"Where's the date? write down the day of the month and the year."

Dudley did so; Pierre made a similar entry, designating himself, by desire of the janitor, as "serving-man to the above;" and a page now presented himself to escort them to the house. Sir Eustace had directed that no menial should presume to enter by the principal gate, and Pierre was accordingly desired to wait in the lodge until the page should return, when he would conduct him to the offices. The broad gravel-walk that led to the mansion was intersected by another, the central point where they crossed being ornamented by a massy stone sun-dial, around which was laid out the garden, in beds of flowers of every whimsical shape, with low clipped borders, called knots. On one side of the enclosure

was a horn-beam maze ; on the other an artificial mount, around which a narrow serpentine path, bordered with cockle-shells, led up to the summit, which was crowned with a bright red seat. At each corner of the parallelogram arose a melancholy yew-tree, clipped and tortured into the rude resemblance of a peacock, in that barbarous style of verdant statuary, which then betokened the first childhood of the gardener's art in England, and now attests its second in France. Such little gaiety as the flowers might have thrown around this formal parterre, was chilled by the melancholy look of the maze and the mount, as well as by the preposterous aspect of the huge dark peacocks, which seemed to have scared away even the singing-birds, for not a beak was to be heard. A slightly elevated terrace ran along the front of the house ; and, as the peacock was the family cognizance, it had been deemed highly appropriate to station two more as supporters to the principal entrance, on each side of which they extended their yew-tree tails in exact and mournful correspondence with each other.

Like most of the gentry who were not enrolled in the ranks of the church or the law, Sir Eustace Poyns had been a soldier, and one who had acquired no mean celebrity in the field. When peace sent him back to his manor of Beckhampton, he beguiled the time by waging war against the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air ; and when his increasing infirmities incapacitated him from following hound and hawk, he had no better resource for wiling away the hours, than by superintending the most minute details of his household with a microscopic eye, and laying down orders for its regulation with a finical and fantastical precision. To the love of order, which he had acquired partly in his military life, he did not forget to add the strict severity of military discipline ; and perhaps no garrison had ever been governed with so rancorous and unrelenting a martinetship as the family of Sir Eustace Poyns. Prescribing nothing to others, which he did not most scrupulously observe himself, it never for a moment occurred to him, that the young and the cheerful could find anything irksome in that routine of rigorous mono-

tony, which was rather gratifying than otherwise to an old and infirm formalist. On the feast-day of St. Michael the Archangel he invariably insisted that his whole household should assume their winter clothing, and throw it off on the feast-day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, without the smallest reference to the state of the atmosphere. If the weather did not know the day of the month, it was the climate's fault, not their's. Every one of his domestics had a little manual, in which the duties of each day were elaborately detailed ; every hour brought its allotted round of recreation or employment for the whole family ; every breakfast, dinner, and supper, throughout the year, was ordained beforehand, and entered in the household-book ; every addition that might be required by visitants was stipulated and registered according to their number and quality ; and every year that "dragged its slow length along," with such dull mechanical uniformity of clock-work, was the exact counterpart of its predecessor, except that, as the sternness of Sir Eustace and

the austerity of his lady increased with age; their children and household seemed to be condemned to an aggravation of the previous gloom, and a still more inveterate discipline.

Lady Poyns was perfectly adapted for such a husband—treating him with the reverence and homage due from a slave to a lord and master, rather than with the affectionate freedom of a wife and an equal. As the most abject are invariably the most tyrannical, she indemnified herself by exercising over her children a still more humiliating authority than that to which she submitted. Although her eldest daughter was grown up to, and her two others were advancing towards, womanhood, they were to stand like mutes and fools in her presence, in which manner, when they had done sufficient penance at the cupboard-side, leave was perhaps given to a serving-man to fetch them cushions to kneel upon. The prodigious fans, which it was then the fashion for gentlewomen to carry, had a handle above half a yard long, with one of which she often corrected them; even Miss Poyns not having yet outgrown her liability to

this smiting discipline, which, strange as it may sound in our days, was not unfrequently exercised upon grown-up women of distinction in the "good old times."

With a most formal and grim politeness was Dudley received by Sir Eustace, who, from the rank in which he had always moved, had acquired a courteous and urbane demeanour, though he possessed not a particle of that cordiality which can alone confer a value upon such external manifestations. "You are right heartily welcome to England, and above all to Wiltshire," he said, with a cold distant bow,— "but methinks it might have liked you to let us have news of you from France a little less sparingly." Dudley excused himself, by the locomotive life he had led, and the general difficulty of communication; when the knight, after some allusions to his visitant's father, whose loss he regretted; pronouncing him to have been a man of worshipful and strict living, and his singular good friend, and a few other remarks in which the triviality of matter was rather inconsistent with the solemn manner of

their delivery, concluded by asking his guest whether it might please him to have the honour of being introduced to Lady Poyns.

Dudley, who adverted to the probability of his seeing his contracted wife at the same time, and who never wished to appear in any female presence without a scrupulous devotion to the duties of the toilet, requested permission to change his travelling dress, that he might present himself to her ladyship in a more becoming garb.

"Sooth, young man, it is an extremely sensible and proper petition," said the knight, apparently pleased at the respect that it implied; and at the same time summoning a servant, he ordered him to show his guest into the bed-room number seven, of the gallery number one. Upon proceeding up stairs, Dudley found that all the doors of the house were numbered as regularly as those of a modern inn; and his valise, with the Roman numerals "VII." chalked upon its top, having been already conveyed into his apartment, he lost no time in adorning himself, and returning to the chamber in which he had left

Sir Eustace. His re-appearance was for some little time unnoticed by the knight, who was at that moment busily employed with his steward in looking over the household-book, and stoutly maintaining that there could not possibly be more than fifty-six codfish and forty-eight ling in the larder, while the servant affirmed that he had counted them repeatedly over, and there was certainly one more of each. By gaining these two unfortunate fish, Sir Eustace had completely lost his temper, appearing to be more grievously annoyed at the discovery of a small surplus, than other masters would have been at finding a great deficiency. It was not the question of quantity, however, that he at all considered, but the mistake in the reckoning, of which some one must have been guilty ; and as he himself would much rather have been convicted of a crime than an inaccuracy, he was proportionably anxious to ascertain the real author of so heinous and flagrant an enormity. Having at length observed Dudley's return, he dismissed the inculpated steward with a stern look, declaring that it was much too serious an affair to be

passed over, and that he should shortly proceed to the servants' hall, to institute a solemn and rigorous scrutiny into this mysterious business.

Endeavouring to resume his composure before Dudley, and even affecting a tone of pleasantry, he continued—" This impatience of yours, Master Poyns, to see your bride is natural enough and mislikes me not; for, sooth to say, where there was a mistress concerned, I was myself ever a forward gallant, and I still love to see it in others, though I may not be now altogether so nimble, debonair, and frolicsome as was once my wont." Dudley could hardly suppress a smile at this declaration from a starched and austere precisian, who looked as if he had never been young, or at least as if his cold blood had never been thawed by the flames of love, or the quick pulsations of festive merriment. " Howbeit," continued the knight, " I still suffer not my vivacity or eagerness to overmaster my discretion. I would proceed regularly and methodically in all things, and seeing that the contract of marriage made by myself and your worthy father, (God have his soul !)

stipulates that it shall take place when Bridget attains her eighteenth year, I must give you to understand that she yet lacketh eight months and twelve days of that period, so that you have no remedy, Master Poyns, but to wait and cool your ardour; though I repeat, young man, that your impatience is natural and mislikes me not."

Dudley was again disposed to smile at being accused of impatience for a match, which he came with the full intention of breaking off, and towards which he entertained every moment an increasing repugnance; but as he felt it awkward to disclaim the imputation, and could not consistently with truth acknowledge it, he contented himself with inquiring what were her ladyship's sentiments upon the subject. "Lady Poyns, Sir," replied the knight, drawing himself haughtily up—"is accustomed to have no opinions but mine;—touching this matter, my will is known to her, and she shall personally confirm it to you." At these words he rang the bell, saying to the servant who entered—"Tell your mistress that I desire her presence."

It was not long before Dudley had the honour of being introduced to her ladyship, a personage of small stature, with a sour and pinched physiognomy, dressed in an old-fashioned though somewhat splendid style, and bearing in her hand one of those enormous fans, to whose double use we have already adverted. Accosting Dudley with a distant and reserved manner, as she moved her body gently backwards and forwards in prim accordance with her fan, she congratulated him on his arrival, and endeavouring to expand her contracted mouth into a smile, while she bridled in her chin, she proceeded to express her conviction that there was a certain young lady in the house, who had been made at least as happy as herself in learning his arrival. "We are flattered, good Sir," she added, "by the eagerness to press forward the marriage which your present visit betokens; but in sooth it may not be, it may not be. Methinks girls in these toward days, would be women before their mothers, so misproud are they, and overbold; but eighteen is a full early age for undertaking the management of a house."

hold, and though Bridget be a duteous girl and good, she is some deal too gay and giddy to become a wife before the appointed time. And truly, were it otherwise, it is the will of Sir Eustace, which is a law in this house, that the contract should be fulfilled according to its letter."

"Really," thought Dudley to himself, "these good folks seem to imagine that I am come to run away *with* their daughter, instead of *from* her, as it is my settled purpose to do as soon as possible; and unfortunately I cannot explain to them their mistake without an unpleasant scene, which I am most anxious to avoid." In this dilemma he merely bowed to her ladyship's speech, as if acquiescing in its purport, and tendered to her a chair, for she had been standing the whole time; but she declined availing herself of it, until Sir Lionel very condescendingly exclaimed—"Lady Poyns, you are at liberty to be seated," when she placed herself within it. Sir Eustace now drew his chair nearer to her's, hemmed three times, looked more than usually grave, and declaring that he had a matter of the deepest importance to com-

municate to her, Dudley lent all his ears to his discourse, taking it for granted that he had altered his views respecting the marriage, and meant to recommend its immediate celebration, a proposition which would place his auditor in a most embarrassing predicament. He was cogitating in his own mind how he should escape from it, when, to his infinite relief, the knight began a most prolix and elaborate statement respecting the two supernumerary fish, whose apparition he seemed to consider little short of a miracle, pronouncing it to attach such culpable irregularity somewhere, and to constitute altogether so momentous and inexplicable an affair, that he felt himself bound to proceed to its strict investigation without further loss of time.

“A more forbidding, prosing, and pragmatical old formalist,” thought Dudley to himself, when he quitted the room, “it has never been my fate to encounter, and I hope he may continue to sit upon this fish inquest until I can make my escape from his horrible hall. If the daughter be like her parents, I cannot too soon undeceive

them and her, as to their confident expectations; but I will at least see the damsel and judge for myself, that I may not be accused of any undue precipitation." In the hope of obtaining some information respecting her, he ventured to inquire after her health, when the kind mother replied—" Oh, Master Dudley, we never allow any of our children to be ill; there would be no end to if it we did: they are strictly forbidden to fall sick upon pain of starvation; which is the only remedy we ever apply, for with such good and orderly living as ours, we were badly sped indeed to need for doctors. You will have a stout wife, I promise you."

" When may I expect the pleasure of seeing her?" demanded Dudley, who had been by no means desirous of bringing the conversation to this conclusion.

" The customs and order of Beckhampton Hall, Sir, are never altered for any visitant; every thing is done by rule and measure in our worshipful household. This is the tapestry hour, and my daughters are busy with their needles, embroidering copies of Master Shel-

don's maps. It may like you, perchance, to see how well they have been taught their tent-stitch, wherefore, if it is your good pleasure, we will to the work-room, for Bridget knows of your arrival, and will not be sorry to make acquaintance with her future husband."

" Still reverting to the old point," thought Dudley, although he thanked her ladyship for her proposal, and accompanied her to the work-room, on approaching which he imagined he could catch the sound of hurry within, as if the young ladies, having discovered the return of their task-mistress, were hastily resuming their occupations. If such had been the case, they had very adroitly replaced themselves, for when he entered he beheld three girls bending over their work with busy and profound attention.

" Mistress Bridget," said the mother to the eldest daughter—" this is Master Dudley." At this intimation the young lady, without betraying any particular emotion, half raised herself from her seat, lifted her eyes once up, gently inclined her head, and again seating herself,

resumed her work with the same earnest attention as before. In one glance Dudley had discovered that she was tall and handsome, with fine large hazel eyes : but heavens ! what a useless gift was beauty to such a cold unfeeling automaton as she appeared to be ? what a rustic Joan too, in her manners and attire ! her dark hair combed strait down, no partlet around her neck, loose demi-sleeves, that she might work the more freely with her naked arms, her waist of a square shape, and the camlet placket sticking out in large gathers upon the hips, more like a butter-wife's wench, that trudges to market with a lockram kerchief about her head, and her shoes smeared with tallow, than the eldest daughter of a gentleman of worship ! While such were the thoughts passing hastily through his mind, Mistress Dorothy, the second daughter, ventured to steal a glance at such a phænomenon as a young and handsome male visitant ; still, however, keeping her hands in motion, to escape her mother's observation, a manœuvre which was unfortunately doomed to fail, for in thus working in the dark, she broke her silks, and

the old lady, who had marked the whole process with her small malignant eyes, struck her sharply across the shoulders with her fan-handle, exclaiming “ What now, I trow, Mistress Gigitel, is it thus you mind your tapet? loók to your silks and your weaving-pin, or I will make a sampler of your shoulders.”

The elder sister plied her work with increased assiduity at the intimation, as if expecting a similar infliction; and as for the youngest, Mistress Katherine, it was obvious from a red mark across the back of her neck, that she had not been forgotten in the chastisements of the morning.

Disgusted at this scene of maternal rigour, so different from the affectionate demeanour of the amiable Lady Fitzmaurice; and not less offended by the lumpish and insensible appearance of his intended, who looked neither to the right nor the left, but pursued her manufacture with imperturbable diligence; Dudley, after bestowing a hasty commendation upon the tapestry, bowed to the youthful sempstresses, and quitted the apartment, glad also to be re-

leased from the mother, who declared that her presence was necessary, to prevent such idle sluts from wasting their time. He had not long, however, to congratulate himself, for in the hall he encountered Sir Eustace, who informed him that he had been prevented from proceeding in the investigation of the fish affair, by the temporary absence of a material witness, and invited him to walk round the garden. The knight called for his shoes, No. 4, and having put them on, they proceeded to the garden, when Dudley expressed his surprise that he should so well preserve his flowers, where there were so many young folks in his family, most of whom were doubtless fond of nosegays. "No child of mine," said the knight sternly, "would dare to pick a flower; and if they did, they could not escape detection and punishment, for every stalk is numbered." By this time they had reached the yew peacocks, when he took occasion to inform his visitant, in a narrative of half an hour's duration, that one of his ancestors, named Sir Eustace, having slain a noble Saracen in the first crusade, had as-

sumed his cognizance, which displayed two peacocks, and had thenceforward been called Sir Eustace des Paons. This honorary addition became anglicised and corrupted, in process of time, into De Poyns; and his grandfather having, very unwarrantably, as he thought, dropped the prefix, it had finally settled into the single word ‘Poyns;’ “a name, Sir,” he concluded, “which you have the honour to bear yourself: it is therefore right that you should know its history, and you will the less wonder that I surround myself with these memorials of its origin.”

A bell now sounded from the house, whose purport the knight explained to his visitant. It was the signal for his daughters to dress, and for his three sons, who had been hitherto with their tutor, to take their recreation. “Youth is the season for pleasure,” he continued: “I was once gay and gambolsome myself, and it likes me not to see children too much mewed up and debarred of their daily pastime.” As he said this, his three sons made their appearance, exhibiting considerable signs

of trepidation as they approached their father. Not less stiff, formal, and antiquated in their constrained manners than the cut of their garments, they resembled those superannuated melancholy-looking boys, whom one occasionally sees carved in stone, and holding bibles in their hands, over a charity-school gate. "Remember, boys," said the father, with a forbidding look and an authoritative voice, "that up to the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, you are to walk four times round the garden, to pass ten minutes in the maze, and ten minutes on the mount, and to return the moment you hear the bell. But no loud talking, no romping, no running, on pain of the rod. Begone!—Poor things!" he continued, as they marched formally off to enjoy this mournful pastime; "it is pleasant to see them so happy. Ah! they are young and frolicsome, and 'twere a hard dole indeed were they to be letted or stinted, for we have all of us been madcaps in our time, Master Dudley. After the St. Michael, they walk twice more every day round the garden; and after the Annunciation of our Lady, they cease

visiting the mount or the maze, so that, God wot, they have variety enow; but youngsters are wanton and changeful, and one cannot grudge it them."

Dudley could not but admire this new and ingenious mode of tormenting, which, by making even their recreations compulsory and uniform, converted their leisure into a drudgery, and that which was meant for pastime into a monotonous and tristful penance. His own conference with Sir Eustace he felt to be scarcely less so; and he was proportionably gratified at the intelligence, when the six regulated tollings of the great bell were interpreted by his companion to signify the announcement of dinner.

In the dining-room he found her ladyship and Miss Poyns, who was the only one of the young ladies allowed to appear. Whether her doing so now were one of the customary arrangements of this automatical family, or in special honour of his own visit, he could not discover, nor was he very anxious to determine.

Her garments had indeed been changed, but she had benefited very little by the circumstance, for they were still in the worst possible taste, and of the most antediluvian fashion. She spoke only in monosyllables ; her look was equally inflexible ; her countenance and clothes appearing to be alike cut out of buckram ; and as he gazed upon the female machine, he recalled with utter amazement her mother's declaration that she was "some deal too gay and giddy to become a wife before the appointed time." That her features were good, and her figure by no means deficient, in spite of her disguising garments, he was indeed enabled to confirm in the present interview ; and if some Pygmalion could have prevailed upon Venus to animate the statue, and any Parisian tirewoman could have imparted to the vivified marble an air of fashion, Miss Poyns might be so far rendered endurable as to neutralize her name of Bridget. These, however, were miracles not likely to occur ; and he therefore made up his mind very promptly and very decidedly to decline the

honour of her hand, leaving to future consideration the time and manner of signifying his intentions to the family.

After dinner, the remainder of the children being admitted, were ranged in front of the cupboard, where they stood for some time like so many statues, neither moving nor speaking, until some new bell sounded, which, although it summoned them to tasks they hated, was welcome to their ears, because it removed them from their taskmasters, whom they hated worse. Miss Poyns remained; and, as her mother was apparently anxious to display her accomplishments to her intended husband, she was desired to seat herself at the clarichord and sing, an order with which she instantly complied. Either from apprehension of her parents, or alarm at the presence of a stranger, she became confused, and performed in a very bungling manner; and as the fierce invective, with which Sir Eustace very judiciously assailed her, for the purpose of restoring her self-possession, did not immediately attain that end, he angrily bade her quit the room, a command which she mechanically

obeyed, without any apparent alteration of her features.

To the great relief of his visitant the knight withdrew in a short time, to renew his investigation into the affair of the two fish, which seemed perfectly to haunt him, and, however inexplicable might be their apparition in the larder, Dudley was still more amazed at the stockfish that had just visited the parlour, in the shape of Miss Poyns. As to the idea of his marrying such a mermaid, who was, however, no syren, if he might judge by her singing, he had already dismissed the very thought from his mind, and began already to meditate his quick escape from the doleful penitentiary in which she was immured.

Of Sir Eustace he saw nothing more till night, when the great bell, whose iron tongue was made a substitute for the human voice, summoned the family to prayers, and the parents, who by their tyranny had been a curse to their children throughout the whole day, now making them fall upon their knees before them, went through the solemn mockery of giving them their blessing, and dismissed them to enjoy

the only real one that was left to them, the oblivion of sleep. The next day being the Sabbath, the whole family marched off in pairs to the church, where, as Dudley contemplated the knight and his lady kneeling, surrounded by their six children in the same attitude, all looking equally cold, stiff, and stony, he could not help imagining that there would be very little difference, either in their feelings or appearance, when, their present semi-petrification being completed, the whole group should be sculptured on the family monument, and set up not far from the spot where he now beheld them. After their return from church, an invitation from Sir Eustace, to accompany him in a ride, offered Dudley some chance of a little variety, but they proceeded along the road he had already traversed in coming from the Tor House, and when he proposed that they should strike into some other, his companion drily informed him that he had prescribed rides for every quarter of the year, from which he never, upon any account, deviated, always proceeding in the same direction, and turning back at the same point.

To this he scrupulously adhered upon the present occasion, and the circumstance completed Dudley's disgust. The human vegetables of Beckhampton Hall appeared to him to possess but a small degree of locomotion, to distinguish them from their fellows of the field. In such a methodical, inexorable routine, the charm of novelty was lost; hope, the very salt of existence was denied them, for the future being a dull, uninteresting, predestined copy of the past, the parties might live on for ever without seeing any more of life. To-day had been yesterday; it was doomed to be to-morrow; this was the whole unvarying history of the year, and the years were like the days. With all Sir Eustace's formality and forethought, it appeared to Dudley that he had been guilty of one omission —he had forgotten to specify the day when the whole family, wearied and moped to death, might make their escape from Beckhampton Hall, by hanging themselves up on the great peacock-trees at the entrance, to deter future travellers from trespassing upon their gloomy precincts.

Determined to effect his own deliverance before any such catastrophe should occur, he informed Sir Eustace forthwith, that matters of importance requiring his presence in London, he should be under the necessity of quitting him that afternoon, a communication which was received without any apparent surprise or regret. On the subject of the marriage he said nothing whatever, willing to spare all parties the pain of an explanation, which might be just as well effected by letter after he should have quitted the house. Upon his return to the Hall, Pierre was ordered to prepare the horses, and his intentions being made known to Lady Poyns, she assembled her daughters that he might take leave of them. Not the smallest emotion was perceptible upon the countenance of the eldest; her last cold and formal salutation was like the first; her ladyship delivered herself of a low and elaborate curtsey; Sir Eustace condescended so far as to say that he would have accompanied him a few miles, but that it was not his quarter to ride in that direction; and thus was Dudley dismissed from Beckhampton Hall, congratulating

himself upon his escape ; and as he thought of the inanimate and ill-clad Bridget, he reverted with increased complacency and admiration to the spirited, stately, and splendid Beatrice.

CHAPTER IX.

A supple, servile, heartless, knave,
Who, while he owned himself a slave,
Sang his own pæan.
Yet merrier wag you ne'er shall meet,
Nor a more selfish and complete
Epicurean.

NEITHER his predilection for Beatrice, nor his deliberations as to the form, in which he should indite the letter declining the hand of the inanimate Bridget, were suffered by Dudley to banish from his mind the duty that he owed to his unfortunate cousin Cecil, or to check the speed with which he urged his progress to London. Sir Lionel, he was well aware, would anticipate his designs, and quickly put every engine in motion to frustrate them. With such an active and powerful adversary, no time was

to be lost. His military habits had enabled him to endure fatigue ; and he accordingly pushed forward with a rapidity that somewhat disconcerted Pierre, who, being a less practised horseman than his master, would have frequently flagged, had he not recruited his spirits by going through the whole round of his songs and ballads. During his progress it had occurred to Dudley, that from the multiplicity of the Lord Cardinal's avocations, and the great difficulty of obtaining personal access to him, without the intervention of some resident in London who might have influence enough to second the abbot's letter, and press upon his lordship's attention the necessity of prompt measures, it would be highly advisable to secure the co-operation of his kinsman Sir John Dudley. The father of this young man, together with his colleague Empson, had been executed in the first year of the king's reign, for oppressions and extortions committed by order of his royal predecessor ; but as he had been merely sacrificed to appease the indignant people, no portion of his disgrace had descended to his son, who had

been some time before knighted for his martial exploits in France, and had been recently appointed Master of the Armoury in the Tower, by the special patronage of Wolsey, a circumstance that pointed him out to Dudley as peculiarly qualified to advocate his cause with that all-powerful minister.

Upon his arrival in London he betook himself in the first instance to the tavern of the Holy Lamb, near the chapel of St. Mary Rounceval at Charing Cross,* a house which he knew to be one of great resort with the courtiers and young gallants of fashion. Here he left his valise in the custody of Pierre, and having no wish to encounter sloughs, almost as formidable as that in which he had been immersed in Somersetshire, he declined the perilous passage of the Strand, and took to the river, which was at that period, from the general badness of the roads and streets, the prevalent medium of conveyance from one part of the town to another. Landing at London

* On this site, part of Northumberland House now stands.

Bridge, the fearful houses upon which, as they hung over the river, seemed to shake in accordance with the roaring and rushing of the waters beneath, as if they trembled at their own danger, he proceeded towards Thames Street, where he observed the people running and thronging together, and at the same time heard the sound of trumpets, and loud cries of “The King ! the King !” At the bottom of New Fish Street he met a party of the royal guards, in white doublets, with black and white ribands in the sleeves, black Gascoyne hose, and white garters, all wearing steel murrions, and armed with a caliver or demi-musquet. The King followed, in the midst of a gallant company of noblemen and attendants, mounted on stately horses ; the whole party proceeding on a visit to the Earl of Suffolk, for the purpose of enjoying the pleasures of the chace in his park of Southwark. From the wind having blown the feather of his cap over his face, only a glimpse of the King had been obtained in passing ; but as the cavalcade proceeded along the narrow, crowded, and darksome street of London Bridge,

his portly figure was still distinguishable above the rest, and Dudley remained for some time alternately gazing at the numerous heads thrust from every window, or the nodding plumes of the royal party, which, as they descended the slope towards Southwark, were occasionally seen and lost between the projecting signs, or the frequent beams of strong timber, that crossed the street to keep the houses together and prevent them falling into the river. The sound of the trumpets being confined by the buildings on either side, seemed to be wafted towards him with undiminished loudness, until the procession had reached the Borough, when it died gradually away, and the gay assemblage passed out of sight.

Continuing his route, after this momentary interruption, along Thames Street, and up Woodroof Lane to Tower Hill, he entered the fortress by the postern-gate, which at that time stood nearly opposite to the Cross in the Minories. On gaining access to his kinsman, a young man about his own age, with whom in their boyish days he had lived in some degree

of intimacy, he encountered a frank and friendly reception, and was readily promised such aid and counsel as he could consistently afford him. But when Dudley had stated the cause of his visit to London, and the occurrences of the Tor House, his companion, materially relaxing in his professions, although he maintained the same friendly gaiety in his manner, exclaimed, "Look'ee, coz, for I believe you to be of kith and kin to me, though, by Gad's lid ! I scarce know what ; I promised you such service as I could consistently afford, that is to say, provided it marred not the trewage and loyalty that I have sworn to another friend, who is nearer and dearer to me than all the world beside."

Dudley protested that he had not the smallest wish to interfere with those, who had better claims to his good offices than himself; nor did he see how his present application could do so, unless, indeed, Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice were the party alluded to.

"No, indeed, my good coz, that doughty Sir Hycke-scorner is no crony of mine ; the name of my good friend is Jack Dudley, alias Sir John

Dudley, alias your servant to command, who has no wish to wear a Tyburn tippet, alias an hempen ruff, nor to let cold steel come between his head and shoulders, as his father did before him ; for the magnum opus, the great business of these times, is to steer clear of the noose, the axe, and the lion's mouth. The King loves a tall and proper man of a comely presence, who carries a blithe eye in his head and a merry tale in his mouth ; they tell me I am like to suit him, and make my way at court, and 'fore Gad ! I meddle in no matter that may check the advancement of my well-beloved and singular good friend Jack Dudley."

"Surely, your interference in behalf of my ill-used cousin Cecil would not thwart your promotion."

"Gramercy, my master ! I know not that Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice stands well with the King, which I may tell you is at once the law and the prophets ; and I will not lift my hand, no, nor my little finger, against any man who has welcome access to the royal ear. Right and justice, and honour and honesty, are very pretty

things; but life and liberty, and the privilege of carrying your head upon your shoulders, are still prettier: bow to the hurricane, if you wish it to pass without knocking you down; swim with the stream, if it like you to avoid drowning; suffer any great man to pull you up hill, but let go your hold when you see him sliding down; call duly upon your slightest acquaintance in prosperity or a palace, but if your dearest friend get into jeopardy or a gaol, stay at home and take care of him who is dearer than the dearest—yourself, for your skirt may be near to you, but your skin is nearer. These are my maxims; ay, and fashionable ones too. How do they like you?"

"There may be two opinions as to their propriety, Sir John; but there can be but one, I should deem, as to their safety."

"Body o' me, I know not that. My father had royal warrant for all that he did, and yet his head was popped into the executioner's basket. Seeing, therefore, that life is at all times short, and in these days somewhat like the pastime that Gregory Dawson invented a game at

blindman's buff, it is another of my maxims to snatch to-day, because I am not sure of to-morrow ; to live while I live ; and eat, drink, and be merry, so long as the sport will last us, as a wise man and a good courtier should do. Fer helping you to a fresh and merry lass, a dainty dinner, a sparkling flagon of French wine, or a jolly crew to tope it till the moon winks at herself in the pint glass, I will back Jack Dudley for a bag of forty-shilling sovereigns.—I have been held, too, somewhat happy in my choice of tailors ; but beshrew my heart ! you Monsieurs of the Calais march make us show like Hobnails and Higgin-bottoms. That French tumbril-shop is transcendent, your doublet is most peremptory excellent, and the gatherings of your riding tunic in the back are each of them worth a king's ransom."

" Truly they have found approof, and the rogue that cut them is a cunning artist, that knows to wield his shears," said Dudley, so much flattered by the compliment as to forget for a few minutes the main purport of his visit. Reverting, however, at length to the subject he

had first broached, he continued—"I fear me then, Sir John, that it will not like you to stead me in this affair."

"So far as an introduction to my good patron, the Lord Cardinal, will do you service, you may rely upon me; for thus far I may safely go without injuring my worthy friend Jack Dudley. Between subject and king, his lordship may look rather to the master than the man; but between Jack and Tom, he is upright and inflexible as Solomon himself; and if it please him to trounce this Flibbertigibbet, this Sir Beelzebub of the Tor Hill, he will bring him quickly upon his marrowbones, however averse he may be to praying, and lay every one of his assistant devils by the heels in spite of their cloven hoofs."

"Is there any hope that I may have speech of his lordship to-day?"

"Not unless you come to him from the wafery, the pantry, the cellerage, the butlery, the spicery, the pitcher-house, or the larder: for he entertains the King and his courtiers to-night, after their return from hunting, and is

as deeply engaged in all the mysteries of the banquet, in subtleties and muammeries, pageants and devices, dances and soft songs; as if his businesses of Cardinal, and Bishop, and Lord Keeper were not enough to keep him from the idle apprentices' dungeon of Little-ease!—Peradventure I may enable you to peep at their pastimes; but in the meantime I must take care for your dinner, for you have doubtless borrowed an appetite both from land and water in your way hither, and I pledge me that you shall eat and drink of the best of both land and water. Not such garrison-cheer as is doled out to us within these ditch-surrounded walls, but dainty tipple and toothsome viands at a worshipful city tavern, wherein I will install you. Soon as I have doffed these military trappings, we will sally forth to the attack, and in the meantime here is a French volume to amuse you, which perchance never made its way to your quarters in the English pale. It is entitled *Amadis de Gaul*, newly translated from the Spanish—a wild romance and not over decent; but you may shut it up if you are shortly going to confession."

The heartless and selfish epicurism thus unblushingly avowed, disowning moral obligation, and grasping at sensual enjoyment or worldly advancement at every expense, had become the fashionable immorality in a court where the monarch set no better example; and his minions, seeing no security for life but in the most slavish submission; and even in that degradation no assurance against the sudden changes of his capricious tyranny, were fain to make a mockery of all public and private principles, while they pursued their own interests and gratifications with an abandoned zeal. Dudley was therefore neither shocked nor surprised at his professions; and determining to avail himself of his assistance as far as he was willing to go, be-took himself to the perusal of the romance, and quietly awaited his return. It was not long before he reappeared, and issuing forth with his visitant, accompanied him to Eastcheap, which was at that time famous for the number of its taverns and eating-houses, the cooks and masters of which stood at the doors of their respective establishments, inviting the passengers

by the seductive cries of—"Hot ribs of beef, roasted or sodden! chines of pork, mutton gig-gots, goose-pasties baked, pudding-pies, flecks of brawn new killed!" and other popular viands; while the savoury steam of the dishes, and the clattering of pots and pewter, knives and trenchers, intermingled with the merry sounds of the harp, pipe, and psaltery, attested the convivial doings by which the hour of noon was invariably signalized in this esurient quarter.

"Yonder," said Sir John, pointing to a house whose future celebrity he little anticipated—"yonder is the Boar's Head, a tavern where the wine and food are no better than the company; for, sooth to say, it is apt to be haunted by deboshed scroyles, or hectoring swashers, who would rather pick a pocket or a quarrel, than pay a reckoning; and as to its cook, he is daily such an offender as Dick Roose, and deserves no better fate.* But here we are at the Swan, a

* One of the savage enactments of this reign condemned all persons guilty of poisoning, to be boiled to death in hot water. A man named Richard Roose, was thus executed in Smithfield on a Teneber Wednesday.

worshipful house and a noted, whose cook once lived in the King's Palace at Bridewell, and shall serve you up his favourite dishes, such as venison-giggots stopped with olives, chickens in crituary, stewed larks, doe-pasty, hippocras jelly, and cream of almonds. These, however, are only for magnificos and hidalgos, for aldermen and topping merchants, and such only shall you find in his eating-room. For these does he purvey all the new dishes and dainties; and if there be any fresh discovery in fish, fruit, or fowl, here shall you find as soon as on the King's board; so enter and walk up stairs into the private room. I am in good favour here, and though you may have had Gascon cooks to fry for you, I may perchance find you one that, without cracking so loud of his exploits, shall better tickle your palate."

Dudley entered the apartment, where were already assembled several personages, who by their gold chains, double bonnets, and gowns guarded with budge or fur of marterns, appeared to be of civic distinction, a circumstance that might also have been inferred from the zeal

and perseverance with which they were discussing the savoury delicacies placed before them. In due time Sir John, who had been below giving orders, made his appearance, followed by the dinner, which he had himself selected with adequate forethought and deliberation; for he piqued himself upon his talents as a caterer.—“How may this fish like you?” he exclaimed to his visitant—“is it not titillating food, and toothsome? and now that you have so plentifully baptized it with sauce, I would fain know its name.”

“I may safely speak to its good qualities,” replied Dudley, “but I am not clerky enough to give it a name; for, though I have tasted carp abroad ere it was known in England, this is not of the same finny family.”

“Gadso, coz! what, have we a juvenal from the well-furnished tables of Gascony, whom we can puzzle in Eastcheap? Go to, your palate has only learnt its alphabet; it has lived! some score of times from Ash Wednesday to Easter, and yet knows so little of lenten fare, as to be dumbfounded with a fish! Pickerel is its name,

my starveling coz: let the day that you first tasted it be marked in your mouth with a white stone, the colour of its flesh, for there are not many such mornings in a man's life, I promise you. And now, after having cleansed your teeth with a glass of Romagna, sharpen them for a new treat; first telling me whether you be herald enough to blazon the title of this fair and goodly bird."

"A young cygnet, if I mistake me not," said Dudley.

"A most pertinent and saving 'if,' good coz; for no swan, although it be the bird of Apollo, was worthy to be its father or its mother; and might I ever have one of these smoking on my board, I would not envy Jove his eagle, nor Venus her pigeons, nor Juno her peacock. It is a new importation from Turkey, of which barbarous country it bears the name;*

* In Henry the VIII.'s reign was composed the well-known popular distich:

"Turkies, carp, hops, pickerel, and beer,
Came into England all in a year."

Hops, however, had been long known, though per-

but, by Gad's lid ! I shall never more enjoy the stabbing of Mahound in an interlude, seeing that the gorbelliad Saracen has sent us such an ambrosial peace-offering as this. Taste, and you will envy the subjects of Sultan Solyman."

Dudley confessed it to be a delicacy which impressed him with much more amiable notions of the Mussulmans than any he had previously conceived.

" I gave you my avouch," resumed Sir John, " that if there were any fresh discovery in fish, fowl, or fruit, we should find it here; for the two first I have redeemed my pledge, and thus do I venture for the third." So saying, he cut a fruit in half, and squeezing some of its juice upon a lump of sugar, handed it to Dudley to taste, desiring him at the same time to give it an appellation. Upon his declaring his inability to do so, and praising its flavour, the delighted epicure continued : " It is of all surely the Hesperian apple for which Atalanta, like a haps not previously grown in England: and malt-liquor, under different denominations, is of great antiquity.

sapient and sapid wench, was well content to lose the race : it ought to have borne her name, though the dullards who brought it to our shores have termed it a lemon. Not a week has passed since the first produced in England received the praises of our quick-palated King, when placed before him in the great feast at Leathersellers' Hall ; and from this you may judge that the landlord of the Swan is no sluggish caterer. Nay, nay, you must not make as if your meal were done, until you have pronounced upon this jelly. For the receipt by which it is prepared I am to thank my special good friend, Tom Cromwell, who, though a blacksmith's son, has the tooth of a cardinal, and it is of the exact same condiment as that wherewith he so politickly tickled the Pope's palate in Italy.

" It is, indeed, a most winning and insinuating confection," said Dudley ; " and now, after my hearty commendation of your provision, which I may well term rare and royal, I am ready to do your bidding for the rest of the morning."

" Then I bid you tender your assistance in

crushing a demi-pottle of wine, of which our landlord has good store laid in before the new act, for since French wines have been limited to eight-pence the gallon, and Malmsey and Romney sack to a shilling, the knavish vintners have been apt to baptize their brewage, and gain in water what they lose in price. Shall it be of these mixtures, or a tankard of muscadine and eggs?"

Dudley having decided for the latter, it was promptly produced and complacently dispatched; when they recommenced their stroll, betaking themselves first to Goldsmiths' Row, in Cheapside, where Sir John had occasion to call upon one of his tradesmen. It exhibited a range of fourteen shops, all in one uniform and handsome frame of wood-work, beautified towards the street with the goldsmiths' arms, and likenesses of wood-men, (in memory of Thomas Wood the builder,) riding on monstrous beasts, and all richly painted and gilt. In this busy quarter were nothing to be seen but open windowless shops, with flowers on the front counter, and rushes on the floor; some of the apprentices in

their gowns, standing against the walls, cap in hand, like so many statues, others waiting for a kick at the foot-ball as it passed ; while a third set, in imitation of the cooks of Eastcheap, invited the passenger to enter, by recommending the quality, pattern, and cheapness of their respective wares, though the flapping and creaking of the innumerable signs planted before the doors, or hanging across the street, frequently drowned their voices.

" Let us avoid yonder crew of foul-mouthed water-carriers at the great Conduit of Cheap," said Sir John ; " for while they are wrangling for their turn, the saucy knaves are apt to throw lewd language at the passengers, or perchance bespatter them with the rincings of their buckets ; and Gad's pity ! cousin mine, it were little less than sacrilege to stain that tumbril slop, or pounced doublet, of which I shall surely dream this night, if I have time to sleep. Keep on this side, and we will down Newgate Street to the college of Signior Rocco, the Master of Offence in Warwick Lane, where, if it like you, I will take my lesson, which I fail not to do three

times in the week ; and besides, there is to be a wager-fight of Italians against English, which I would not miss seeing for a capful of royals."

Allusion having already been made to the rage for duelling, and the necessity that every young man of distinguished fashion should have killed at least one antagonist; it were needless to state that the dexterous use of the sword was an accomplishment cultivated with an assiduity proportioned to its importance. To Sir John, whose governing principle it was to live as long as he could, proficiency in this art became a paramount object ; Dudley's skill in the weapon, and his invariable success previously to the encounter with Sir Lionel, have been already noticed ; it may be therefore easily supposed that he acceded gladly to the proposition, and that they both entered the arena with a feeling of deep interest in its proceedings. Round about the great room of his college, Signor Rocco had caused to be hung up the coats of arms of all the noblemen and gentlemen who had been his scholars, beneath which were suspended their rapiers, daggers, gloves of mail, and

gauntlets; benches and stools being ranged along the walls for the accommodation of spectators. On a large square table, covered with a green cloth fringed with gold, stood a rich standish with pens, ink, wax, pin-dust, and fine gilt paper, for the use of his scholars; and in one corner of the apartment was a fair large dial to enable him to apportion his lessons equally,—a matter of some consequence to the learners, as he scarcely taught any under forty pounds, and to some his charge was as high as a hundred. The wager-fight between the English and Italians was to be a combat of three and three in succession, all the parties being teachers of the art, at the single rapier, rapier and dagger, the single sword, the sword and target, the sword and buckler, the two-handed sword, the staff, battle-axe, and morris-pike; the scene of action being an elevated open scaffold, where he that went back in the fight was in danger of breaking his neck by the fall.

This barbarous gladiatorial combat had already commenced when they entered; but as it is not our purpose to detail it, we content our-

selves with stating, that after they had witnessed several ugly wounds and dangerous falls, Sir John withdrew with Signior Rocco to his private room to receive his lesson, when Dudley drawing his rapier desired this celebrated master to use his utmost skill in endeavouring to disarm him. This, after the most strenuous and repeated efforts, he was unable to effect, a circumstance by which his challenger was not a little gratified, as it convinced him that Sir Lionel's victory was solely ascribable to supernatural agency.

Making their way from this savage school, they proceeded to Queen Hithe, where Sir John had ordered his own boat to be in attendance; for when the court, the theatres, the tower, and the public offices were all by the river-side, and many of the streets were hardly passable, a boat or barge formed a much more essential part of a gentleman's establishment than a horse. Crossing the water, they landed at Bankside for the purpose of visiting the Bear Garden and the Bull-baiting, which were open plots of ground scaffolded about with seats for the spectators,

beneath which were kept bears, bulls, and other beasts, as well as mastiffs in different kennels, for the purpose of baiting them. Paris Garden, a more regular circus for sports of the same cruel description, was next visited, but as Sunday was the principal day of entertainment at this place of amusement, and there were now hardly any pastimes exhibiting, they proceeded to the Globe Theatre, on whose roof a flag, waving from a long pole, indicated that the performance was then going on. Passing beneath its sign of Hercules supporting a Globe, they entered an octagonal building, partly open at top and partly covered with rushes, where they were recreat'd with the performance of a mystery entitled "Candlemas Day, or the Killing of the Children of Israel," written by Ihan Parfre. In this rude play, the Hebrew soldiers were made to swear by Mahound or Mahomet, who was not born till six hundred years after; Herod's messenger bore the name of Watkin; and the knights were directed to walk about the stage, while Mary and the infant are conveyed into Egypt. Such was the state of the drama,

and such were the absurdities exhibited in that very theatre, where, in little more than half a century, Shakspeare was destined to act the character of the Ghost in his own tragedy of Hamlet.

On the bank, as they again made their way towards the river, they passed the licensed houses of ill-fame, where Sir John pointed out to his companion a gross, though characteristic, satire upon his patron, the Lord Cardinal, the proprietor of one of these infamous haunts having assumed for his sign the cardinal's hat. Directing the watermen, when they regained their boat, to take them to Westminster, they landed near the Star Chamber, for the purpose of playing at the game of shovel-board, as well of visiting the Bowling Alley, both of which pastimes were then in vogue, and to be enjoyed at a house of entertainment in that neighbourhood. Here they completed the wanderings and recreations of the morning, and, if there be more of refinement in the modes adopted by young men of rank and fashion in the present æra to beguile the same hours, it may be attributed to the

increased civilization of the age ; if, however, there be an equal waste of time, when the resources for employing it are so much more numerous, the moderns must stand convicted of less rationality, even although we may admit their claim to greater elegance.

Returning to the tavern of the Holy Lamb, Dudley made such alterations in his dress as might qualify him for admittance into the gallery of the great chamber in the cardinal's palace, to which Sir John had promised to procure his introduction, that he might witness the entertainment to be given to the King and his companions on their return from hunting. Both being arrayed in fitting trim to comply with the regulations, they proceeded to York House, (the precursor of our modern White-hall, great part of which had been recently erected,) and passing through the gate of entrance, which was flanked on either side by lofty embattled towers, they found themselves surrounded by irregular piles of building, whose varying architecture attested the different æras of their construction, and constituted alto-

ther a palace of such great extent, that the want of uniformity was amply compensated by the spacious and picturesque air of the whole. A card, signed by George Cavendish, the Cardinal's gentleman-usher, which had enabled them to pass the gate, quickly procured them admission into the gallery ; for, notwithstanding the throng of visitants of all descriptions, and for every variety of purpose, such was the number of attendants, and the admirable arrangement, that not the smallest confusion was anywhere perceptible. After ascending the narrow stone stairs conducting to the gallery, which were but indifferently lighted, they were almost dazzled with the blaze of splendour that irradiated the great room upon which they looked down, and not less struck with the brilliant appearance of the company, and the costly magnificence of the banquet prepared for their recreation. Well might the Cardinal's historian be justified in recording, that upon occasion of these royal visits, "all such pleasures were devised for the King's comfort and consolation as might be invented, or by man's wit

imagined. The banquets were set forth with masques and mummeries in so gorgeous a sort and costly manner, that it was a heaven to behold. There wanted no dames or damsels, meet or apt to dance with the maskers, or to garnish the place for the time with other goodly disporta. There was there all kind of music and harmony, set forth with excellent voices both of men and children."*

Immediately after their entrance, an Italian commeneed singing a trio with two boys, his pupils, forming a dulcet harmony, so soft, mellifluous, and sweet, that the company, suddenly arrested as they had been dispersed about in groups, stood listening to the strain in a silent trance of rapturous delight. It might have been thought that some magician had struck them with his wand in the midst of their festivities, and turned them into statues, so breathless did they seem; so mute, and motionless. Even the air appeared to be hushed and listening, while the flames of the waxen torches burnt straight and steady, as if they would not withdraw

* Cavendish's Life of Wolsey.

the attention by their flickering ; and the large banner suspended over the King's seat ceased its gentle waving, as if the rustling of its silk might mar the melody. The visitants in the gallery were equally entrapt ; nor was there a single inmate of that crowded saloon, of whom it might not be said that his soul was in his ears. When the last cadence died tunefully away, the profound silence still continued for several seconds, as if the company were either listening to its departure or hoping its renewal ; but when it became certain that the strain had ceased, a loud buzz of approbation burst spontaneously from the whole assemblage, in which the tenants of the gallery thought proper to bear a share. Momentary and irrepressible as was the emotion, it neither escaped the keen observation nor the quick censure of the Lord Cardinal ; for he looked sternly up to them, and waved his hand for silence, as if to remind them that they were there only upon sufferance, and must not presume to identify themselves with his distinguished guests by any expression of their sentiments. ,

When the spell was dissolved, that had rendered the whole company dumb and immovable, Dudley saw them flaunting about in gay and gorgeous troops, and, as they again indulged in pleasant raillery and laughing merriment, could occasionally catch portions of their discourse. He had leisure now to observe the fine proportions of the sumptuous saloon, hung in compartments with fair arras devised with subjects from Ovid's Metamorphoses, the dainty figuring and rich colours of which were advantageously displayed by the light of the massy silver sconces that hung between each division. Gilt branches of the same costly material, placed upon the tables or suspended from the roof, threw a full blaze over the banquet, which was spread out at the upper end, and sparkled with an incredible profusion of silver vessels; besides which there was a cupboard of eight stages, set with standing-cups, bowls, flagons, and great pots of fine gold, many of them garnished with stones and pearls, "jacinths and smaragds." The Cardinal's numerous gentlemen, in livery coats of the brightest crimson velvet, with chains

of gold round their necks, were seen moving about and issuing their orders to the yeomen and inferior servants, all of whom were in coats of fine scarlet, faced with black velvet a hand broad; and all equally remarkable for their tall and portly figures. Of the banquet, enough could be distinguished from the gallery to show that almost every viand was artificially wrought into some strange device or imitation, while the pastry, jellies, sweetmeats, and more complicated dishes, conformably to the symbolical rage which attained its height in this reign, were fashioned into subtleties, as they were then termed. These hieroglyphics of the cook and the confectioner, by the aid of emblems, mottoes, and devices, were meant to convey some covert meaning, so as to exercise both the palate and the penetration of the guest; the artist endeavouring to show his skill, by rendering these allusions as appropriate as possible to the occasion of their display, and by combining one with another until the whole banquet constituted a sort of eatable allegory. As the greater part of the mottoes contained riddles, whose

composers were by no means squeamish or fastidious, it was an established, though not very delicate, amusement of the young gallants, to present them to their mistresses and female companions, and enjoy the real or affected confusion, with which they protested their ignorance of the meaning, which was, however, generally too broad to escape detection.

Among the various figures moving about in the saloon, none were more conspicuous than the Lord Cardinal himself, attired in scarlet taffeta, with a profusion of the rarest jewels sparkling on every part of his person or dress that would admit of their display. In spite of the patch over his eye, a large wart above his lip, and features not altogether free from coarseness, he did not betray a single symptom of vulgarity; for his face was intellectual, his figure commanding, and his manners remarkable for a combination of graceful dignity with the most affable and winning courtesy. Addressing himself more frequently to the ladies than to the male visitants, it might have been thought that the palace, rather than the cloister

or the courts of law, had been his habitual place of resort from infancy—such was the easy familiarity with which he accosted every guest, and the smiling cheerfulness that he diffused around him whithersoever he moved. The stern look, with which he had enforced the observance of order and decorum in the gallery, was now exchanged for a gracious smile; and the most polished courtier in the saloon could not have acquitted himself with more elegance and urbanity than the Lord Cardinal of York.

Directing his eyes towards the upper end of the hall, whence a louder and more boisterous merriment proceeded, Dudley beheld two figures in strange attire, bedecked with bells and babbles, one of them carrying a monkey on his shoulders, and both engaged in a colloquy mixed with comic gesticulations and grimaces, whose success upon the bystanders was abundantly testified by repeated bursts of laughter. On applying to Sir John for information, he was told that one of them was Master Williams, better known by the name of Patch, the Cardinal's favourite fool; and the other Will So-

mers, the King's jester, from whose arrival he inferred that it would not be long ere the King himself made his appearance. No great entertainment or banquet was considered complete, various as were the pastimes that it commonly combined, without the presence of such professional buffoons ; and Sir John added, that these individuals had well earned the celebrity they enjoyed, by several apt, poignant, and bold remarks to their respective masters, which it might have been perilous for any less privileged tongue to utter. In confirmation of his surmise that the King's appearance would not be long protracted, the report of chambers and ordnance presently announced the arrival of the royal barge, and the company clustered to the windows that looked upon the river to witness the disembarkation. A few minutes more elapsed, when the trumpets stationed in the saloon blew up a loud and lusty peal from their brazen throats, that made the air tremble ; the large doors were thrown open ; and a sparkling galaxy glittered into the hall, that gave its floor the appearance of the starry firmament. Re-

splendent above the rest, both for his portly figure and the gorgeousness of his array, was the King himself, attired in cloth of silver damask, thickly ribbed with cloth of gold; cantled all over with inlayings of precious stones, his plumed flat-cap of purple velvet having a star of diamonds over the forehead, which flashed and bickered, when he moved his head, as if it were on fire. Queen Catherine of Arragon walked beside him, her sad dejected countenance but ill assorting with the splendour of her dress, or the festive scene that surrounded her. Without appearing to notice her, the King cast a single glance around the hall; and then looking sideways at a beautiful female in his train, still walked slowly forward without removing his eyes, as if unconscious that there was any other object in the apartment. By following the direction of his looks, Dudley discovered the figure that thus attracted him, and instantly struck by her beauty, whispered to his companion, “Prythee, Sir John, who is yon dainty piece of loveliness, that steps so like a peacock, and bridles up her fair taper neck

so like a swan, and, with a face enwreathed with smiles of triumph, keeps ever bowing gracefully to the eager salutations of the company. Methinks she should be French, for so her dress bespeaks her, but that no damsel of Gascony or Guienne could ever boast a skin so snowy. How well does that coif-cap of murrey velvet become her, the pearl border contrasting with her dark hair braided on either side her forehead, while the short sable ringlets, that escape from it behind, impart a bewitching whiteness to her shoulders ! And that low-cut French gown, just disclosing enough of her figure to show its voluptuous symmetry, how superior is it to the stiff stomachers, and starched ruffs and tuckers, in which others are encased !”

“ By Gad’s lid, coz !” replied his companion, “ you have a shrewd eye for a winsome wench, and I promise you that our amorous King looks not upon her with a less covetous regard. That is Mistress Anna Boleyn, whose future fortune is already guessed by the courtiers, as you may well judge by the zeal, with which they crowd

around her to offer her their homage. It has been already discovered that the King no longer considers his present consort as his wife; it is conjectured, therefore, that she must soon cease to be his Queen, and the King's eyes sufficiently declare who is to be her successor. Nay, it is rumoured that this young and buxom beauty is shortly to be made a countess, and wear the double train;* therefore is it, that the courtiers flutter about her with such ready reverence, leaving the Queen to sit as solitary in her great ruff, as Madge Howlet in a tod of aged ivy blinking at the light; and, by my troth, they do right; for the daisies that would flourish must open their eyes smilingly to the rising sun, and shut them upon that which is going down. Forsooth, good coz, I have ever found the good Queen a gracious lady and a beautiful, and I would profess myself her Ascapart, her Col-

* The Countess was entitled to wear two trains, one before and one behind; the former being generally thrown over the arm, or fastened in the girdle—a distinction which was prohibited to the Baroness, and all under her degree.

brand, her Guy of Warwick and her champion, but for my loyalty to my honest friend Jack Dudley, whose service requires that I should give her the cold look, and adopt for my patroness the lady of the descendant, sweet Mistress Anna, who is the Diana of our Ephesus, and whose diamond eyes are our Dii mundi. But hist ! what have we here ? Beshrew me, an it be not a Castle, as fine and fierce as tinsel and wooden guns can render it ; so prythee give it all thine eyes."

The object, to which Sir John had thus directed his companion's attention, was one of those gorgeous and cumbersome contrivances entitled a Pageant, which, rolling along upon concealed wheels, presented a mount set full of crystal corals, ruby rocks, tinsel roses, and pomegranates of gold-leaf, the whole crowned with a fortress of gilt towers, labelled and lettered, "The Castle of Beauty," within which was seen a garrison of six comely damsels. From a cave at the bottom of the mount presently issued Desire and his five assistant lords, to attack the castle, arrayed in cloth of silver and

tissue cut in quatre-foyles, the gold engrailed with silver, and the silver with gold, all loose on white satin, and on their heads caps of black velvet enriched with jewels. The brisk volleys of flowers, kissing comfits, sweetmeat-hearts, sugarplums, and arrows of confectionary, with which they attacked the fortress, were answered by discharges of sweet powder, rosé-water, and other perfumes, from the wooden guns of the garrison; but a flame of burnt spirits from the summit of the towers at length intimating that the castle was on fire, the besieged damsels suddenly evacuated the place. To judge by their appearance, they had not much suffered from the siege; their garments of gold tissue, enwoven with crimson tinsel, were fresh and glistering, and they wore their hair in gold cawls, with bonnets of crimson velvet set full of pearls and stones. The conquerors and conquered in this contest of amorous foolery, now joining hands in token of amity, danced several dances together, concluding with the pavan, a grave majestic measure, whose name was derived from its supposed resemblance to the stately motions of

the peacock. This being completed, they resumed their former stations on the mount, to be wheeled back out of the hall; and thus terminated that incongruous and puerile compound of immumery and machinery, designated a Pageant.

No sooner had it disappeared, than the trumpets sounded to the banquet, and the company seated themselves in the *rooms* or places provided for them, according to strict rank and precedence, the King's cloth of estate or royal canopy being elevated at the upper end of the tables. Damask roses had been recently introduced into England by Doctor Linacre, Henry's favourite physician; and as the monarch, from certain political associations, was known to affect the red rose, several of this elegant and novel variety were dispersed about the table in small vases of silver, engraved with the royal arms. Nor had his palate been neglected by the luxurious and considerate cardinal. In addition to all the viands, which had been recapitulated to Dudley at the Swan in Eastcheap, as those which were most honoured by the royal prefe-

rence, he noticed a dish of golden pippins from Plumstead in Sussex, being the first raised in England ; and a richly ornamented stately pie, from whose fragrant steam of ambergris, as it was wafted up to the gallery, Sir John undertook to pronounce it a most finished and faultless specimen of culinary skill. Fond as he generally was of displaying personal magnificence and pomp, and of exacting such homage as had hardly ever been previously paid to a subject, the cardinal, upon this occasion, as if desirous that the whole display should be considered a compliment to his royal master, declined even to take a seat, but walked about, occasionally conversing with the King, or giving such orders as he thought might enhance his enjoyment of the banquet.

When the repast was over, and the guests had washed, a voyde of spices, with hippocras and wafers, was handed around on massive silver salvers, which it required a sturdy yeoman to sustain; and the tables being presently cleared, the minstrels struck up a joyous lively air, while the brisk movements of the younger gallants, as they started on their feet and selected their

curtseying and smiling partners, announced that the dancing was about to commence. According to established usage, the brawl was the first dance, which was performed by several persons joining hands in a circle, and giving each other continual shakes, the steps changing with the tune. To this succeeded the merry movement of the canary; while, as the night advanced, and the spirits of the performers became exhilarated by their pastime, they indulged freely in all the more animated varieties of corantoes, jigs, lavoltos, fancies, and galliards."

Notwithstanding his acknowledged proficiency in this recreation, of which he was known to be passionately fond, the King did not once mix in the sport, but continued nearly the whole of the evening playing at Mumchance with the Countess of Suffolk. In servile imitation of their royal master, many of the senior courtiers were seen dispersed about the saloon plying the dice, and looking prodigiously grave and solemn at the same stupid game; while several of the juniors, affecting not to enjoy any dance, at which they could not see the King perform, were also scattered in little groups and card-parties, playing

at Primero, Trump, Gresco, Gleek, or Double Ruff with Honours, regardless of the two jesters, Patch and Will Somers, who, having taken a station near them, were earnestly occupied at Cross and Pile, mocking as closely as possible the deeply-engaged looks or passionate gestures of the neighbouring gamblers.

"Forsooth," said Dudley, as he surveyed the gay scene below, "if the good Queen Catherine behold a rival in Anna Boleyn, it is truly kind of her to notice her as she does, and even to be playing with her at cards close to the King's table."

"By Gad's lid ! cousin mine," replied his companion, "you are as simple as a nursery-rocker thus to hold her. I tell you, for as meek and demure as she shows, the Queen is cunning as a she-fox ; and yet I can this moment read her heart as plainly as if she wore it on her sleeve. She has condescended to engage Anna at cards, to prevent her displaying her skill and fine figure in dancing, wherein she hath so perfected herself in France as to do shame to the heels of our court-malkins ; and she has taken her sta-

tion close to the King's table, in the hope that she may draw his attention to the supernumerary nail which disfigures one of her rival's fingers, and so disgust him with a deformity which many have deemed ominous and revolting. And harkee, coz, a word in your ear ; for though any one may decry the Queen, it is perilous sometimes even to look at the King : I can read *his* heart as glibly as the Queen's : no sooner did he perceive this manœuvre, than he forswore dancing himself, and selected the game of Mumchance, because, as it enjoins silence, he was under no necessity of conversing with his partner, and might devote his whole attention to Anna. See you not how he devours her with his eyes, how he gloats upon her charms, how carelessly and unconsciously he throws the dice, while his looks and thoughts are turned from his own play to watch the smallest motion of his inamorata ? and beshrew me, if I do not think there is something arch and significant in the furtive smiles and bridling grace, with which she slyly notices his devoirs, while she seems to be only laughing at her own ill-luck, as she loses

every game to the Queen. By the mass ! she may well afford to lose the ruddocks ; for when they come to play together for crowns and sovereigns, she is sure to be the winner."

" Alas ! for the poor Queen," said Dudley ; " methinks she wears a look of smothered sorrow and distress, as if she marked their secret dalliance, howbeit she dare not give utterance to her thoughts. Her rival's supernumerary nail is not long enough to scratch out the name of Anna from the King's heart, and so the good Queen thinks ; for lo you, Sir John, she hath called up the two fools to cheer her sadness by their antic and pranksome gambols."

" Gadamercy ! my candid coz, I am but a youngster like yourself, yet have I seen enough of the Court and Spanish Catherine, to read her actions better than thus to interpret them. See you not how she stations them on the left of her rival, knowing that the light-hearted giglot will be half convulsed with laughter at their foolery, and hoping that an ugly projecting tooth in her upper gum, by catching the

King's fastidious eye, may be more successful in exciting his disgust than the unfortunate double-nailed finger? Giddy and gay, the joyous triumphant Anna indulges her merriment unrestrained, careless of exhibiting the defects of tooth or hand, provided she can display with grace her general loveliness: and truly I have seen enough this night, good coz, to show me that the King has gorged the bait, and my shrewd and worthy friend Jack Dudley, who never throws away a hint, must be cautioned to withdraw himself from the notice, with which the Queen has lately been disposed to honour him, and propitiate the fair Anna by some present that may titillate her French taste—a golden carkanet, or fillagree pomander; a covering for a cushion of Flemish tapestry fashioned like a park, with men, women, and beasts; a Paris stomacher of gold bawdikin purfled and powdered with crymery work; or, if there be no other foreign gear to be had, a parrot or a monkey shall serve the turn, and do me yeoman's service."

“ Forgive me, Sir John, if I do you wrong ; but spite of all your provident resolves to win your way, methinks you are some deal too hare-brained and volatile to play the courtier’s part with good success.”

“ I have told you, coz, that the King loves a proper man and comely, with a blithe eye and a merry tongue, who must have a good head to execute his purposes, and not too good a heart to boggle at an ugly bidding : and if I know aught of Jack Dudley, he is much such a man ; but time will show. Hark ! hark !—By Gad’s lid !—

‘ Good cousin, ’tis late—’tis time to begone,
For Westminster Tom, by my faith ! strikes One.’

“ It will cost me a rose-noble to bribe the guard at the Tower Postern, if I wish not to sleep in the ditch : but I will be with you betimes to-morrow morning ; for, though the Lord Cardinal may not go to bed till the owl, he is always up with the lark ; and so, good coz, for the present I wish thee well to fare.” With

these words he took his departure ; and Dudley, wearied with the exertions of the morning, as well as dazzled by the long glittering of the lights and moving figures beneath him, was glad to follow his example, and retire to his lodgings at the Holy Lamb.

CHAPTER X.

A rattling, reckless, merry wight !
At least his equals would unite
 In this opinion.—
But with the great, the wary knave
Becomes a sycophantic slave
 And sordid minion.

ON the following morning, Sir John made his appearance conformably to his promise, and, Dudley being in readiness to attend him, they again bent their way to York House, where, notwithstanding the early hour of their visit and the lateness of the last night's revels, they found all the numerous officers and servants at their posts, and every thing in as perfect order, as if the regular routine of the vast establishment had not been so lately interrupted by a banquet of unexampled magnificence and extent;

such was the methodical economy of the cardinal's household, and so strictly were the duties of their respective departments performed by his various servants. At the moment of their arrival he was at mass, and Dudley, by the assistance of his gentleman-usher, obtained a view of the chapel, not less dazzled by the incredible gorgeousness of its decorations, than delighted by the full harmony of the choir, which comprised ten singing-priests, twelve secular singing-men, and ten juvenile choristers. A duke and an earl presented to him the bason at the lavatory ; and the service being completed, the cardinal passed forth in stately procession to the private apartments of his palace.

After they had waited a short time in a room appropriated to that purpose, and where there were several other candidates for the honour of an interview, the good offices of the gentleman-usher enabled them to gain precedence, and be first summoned to his private audience-chamber, where he sat every morning, for a limited time, to receive similar applications. Passing through a long file of chamberlains, ushers,

grooms of the chamber, yeomen of the chamber (of whom alone there were forty-five,) and various others, whose offices they did not know, they at length reached the ante-room, in which were divers lords and gentlemen, bearing the great seal of England, the cardinal's hat, the two great crosses and pillars of silver, the silver mace, gilt poll-axes, and all the other insignia of state, by which he was invariably accompanied when he sallied forth upon his official business. From this apartment they passed into the private chamber of audience, where the Lord Cardinal was seated at a large table, attired in an upper garment of crimson satin engrained, with a tippet of sable about his neck, and holding in his left hand an orange, of which the pulp had been taken out, and its place supplied by a sponge steeped in vinegar and perfumes, to preserve him from infectious airs or the annoyance of unsavoury suitors. A secretary, a clerk of the signet, and a counsellor, sate at the lower end of the table.

With a reverence of accost, that in any one but a courtier might have been termed servility,

and a softened, fawning voice, that formed a complete contrast to his usual rattling and reckless manner, Sir John introduced his kinsman, who delivered his letter, and was proceeding to state, as briefly as possible, the object of his application, when he was interrupted by the cardinal. His eminence's demeanour and tones appeared to have undergone a not less surprising alteration than Sir John's, the courteous suavity of last night being exchanged for a harsh and somewhat blustering manner, as he exclaimed, with a frown—" How now, Sir, how now ! why was not this letter from the good Lord Abbot presented to me sooner ?"

" I tarried but two days, my lord, in Wiltshire," said Dudley ; " and then rode forward with such unsparing speed that I might have delivered it yesterday, but that I understood it would not suit your lordship's leisure to grant me audience."

Opening a drawer by his side, the cardinal took out a paper, and handing it to Dudley, continued : " This have I had three days : read it ; runs it not word for word according to the

letter you have just presented to me?" On casting his eyes over it, Dudley perceived that it was a verbatim copy, and again laying it upon the table, said he presumed it had been forwarded by the abbot, though he could not account for the messenger having so strangely outstript his own speed.

"It comes not from Glastonbury, Sir, but from Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice, of the 'Tor Hill,'" said the cardinal.

"From Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice!" exclaimed Dudley, in utter amazement; "is it possible that the lord abbot can have played me false?"

"No, Sir," replied the cardinal sternly; "it is impossible for that good man to play any one false."

"Here, then, is another and a damning proof," resumed Dudley, "of the diabolical aid, by which Sir Lionel is abetted in his guilty machinations; for how else could he obtain knowledge of this letter, or how outstrip me by so many days?"

"These are matters that it would little boot me to know, nor do I sit here to answer questions; but, by God's body! had he ten

times as many devils to do his bidding as were seen by my Lord Dacre at Jedburgh, he shall find the law too strong for him; for if he be the wrongdoer and the foul oppressor this letter would declare, I will tear him out of the Tor House by the heels, even though Beelzebub and Ashtaroth stood upon the drawbridge as his body-guard and champions. The Hungerfords are an ancient race and a loyal; the boy, whether lunatic or sound-witted, falls to my wardship as lord-keeper; and once more I swear, by the five joys of Our Lady, that he shall have right. I have tamed or crushed fiercer rufflers than this Sir Lionel; and while I sit in the chair of justice, the proudest of them that wears a head shall vail bonnet, and do fealty to the law. Begone, Sir, to your man of business; let your deposition be avouched by oath; return me the papers, and fear not, when I have given orders touching it, that your affair shall sleep or loiter upon the road, as you have done yourself."

"Under your good favour, my lord, if I might be permitted to explain——"

"I owe you, Sir, no favour, nor did I call upon you to explain. Sir Lionel, in his letter to myself, avers the youth to be of unsound intellect, into the which fact he courts a full and legal scrutiny. He shall have it; ay, and a strict one too, for I will myself name commissioners and physicians, whom he shall neither cozen with his devils, nor bribe with his gold, nor hoodwink with his craft, nor frighten with the hectoring swashers whom he holds in pay. Wherefore, I bid you be of good contentment, for your cousin shall have full, and quick, and heaped-up justice."

Dudley had opened his lips to express his thanks, when the cardinal interrupted his purpose by continuing, with an angry vehemence: "And so shall yourself; for dokee, sirrah, Sir Lionel writes me word that you are a cankered knave and a disloyal; one who babbles against the King's divorce; meddles, with an overthwart and busy frowardness, in state affairs, and maintains, moreover, the heresies of the pernicious, pestilent, blind, and beastly Luther."

“ As I hope for heaven, my lord, the villain does me foul and flagrant wrong ! Twice has he thrust at my life, and now would he stab my fair fame, that so he may stifle up my voice. I am a soldier, my lord, and have been too busy fighting his grace’s battles in France to dream of his divorce, or to embroil my head with churchmen’s controversies.”

“ How say you to this, Sir John ? are you willing to be of warrant and avouch for your kinsman’s honesty ?”

“ Humbly craving pardon of your eminence for my boldness,” said the knight, not a little disconcerted by this unexpected appeal ;—“ I have held it right for one who wore the same name as myself, to introduce him to your gracious notice ; but for these frightful charges, which are quite new to my ear, I may neither gainsay them nor admit them, having had but a two-days knowledge of my kinsman since we were boys together.”

“ Gull and doddipate ! is it on such slight approof, that you put me to the hateful hazard of holding speech with a Lutheran ?”

“By my soul ! my lord,” exclaimed Dudley,
“it is an accusation—”

“Silence, sir !” cried the cardinal ; “it was not
to you that I addressed my speech.”

“May it please your eminence,” said Sir
John, with an increased servility of tone and
manner—“had I believed that he was such a
spotted heretic, I were a bold and base traitor
to introduce him to my best friend and patron,
whom, in common with all the catholic world,
I look, ere long, to see in the papal chair. Truly
I venture to hope, under your eminence’s fa-
vour, that his accuser does him wrong ; and I
may therefore humbly crave pardon for my last
night’s liberty, in bringing him to the great gal-
lery as a spectator, or rather as an auditor, for
my kinsman had heard so much abroad of your
eminence’s happy eloquence, that nothing would
content him but that he must judge by his own
ears, whether all the marvels he had been told
on this head were sound or hollow sayings.”

“Tush, Sir, tush !” said the cardinal, affect-
ing to look displeased, and yet fishing by his
question for further information—“what should

these babblers prate about, or how should my poor sayings in the courts of London be bruited abroad, even to the camps of France?"

" If it might be spoken without offence to your illustrious eminence," resumed Sir John, " my kinsman tells me, that, ever as there came some fresh gallants or soldiers from London, they would talk of nothing in their quarters but of the learned, sweet, and voluble harangues they had heard in the Star-chamber, the Legatine Court, or the Hall of Westminster. I dare not say, your eminence, from whose mouth they fell, although there be but one in England that can give utterance to such tunable and wondrous lore. So eager was he and importunate to hear this far-famed orator, that I was won to give him admission last night to the gallery, in the which if I have offended my generous patron, I can but throw myself upon his eminence's mercy for forgiveness."

" And prythee, Sir John, since it pleaseth you to entreat of these matters, what might you ween of my last night's discourse, though sooth it was too short to allow of more than

plain and homely speech?" The taunting tone of this question did not deceive Sir John as to its covert intention, for he immediately replied with an air of the blandest sincerity :—

" Too short indeed it was, your eminence ; but ah ! if I might dare express my thoughts without the suspicion of flattery, which I abhor ; —if I could find language ; if my feelings would allow me !—and then that heart-rending, soul-melting allusion to the holy father now a captive and a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo.—Oh, your eminence !—Oh, oh !" Sir John's voice faltered, he hid his face in his handkerchief, and appeared to be completely overcome by his emotions ; while Dudley, who had never uttered a syllable to him on the subject, and knew that as they went away together, his kinsman could not have heard a particle of the speech alluded to, was utterly confounded at the scene before him, which he contemplated with a blank bewilderment, afraid to open his lips, lest he should implicate either his companion or himself.

"Go to, boy; go to," said the cardinal, in a tone of gentle peevishness, "forsooth, you are too soft and sensitive; but your emotion mislikes me not, for it betokens you to be a good Catholic and no unclerkly scholar. Retire, good youth, and compose yourself. Let your kinsman do as he was ordered, and I will myself be of warrant that the young Hungerford, his cousin, shall have overflowing justice."

Sir John made a profound bow, and, without withdrawing the handkerchief from his eyes, walked slowly towards the door; while Dudley, confused by what he had witnessed, stood for a moment irresolute, until an angry wave of the Cardinal's hand, accompanied by a stern exclamation of "Avaunt, Sir!" sent him out of the room, in rapid pursuit of his kinsman.

The latter still retained his face muffled up, in the same apparent depth of feeling, until he had again passed through the great gates of the palace, and turned a corner in the direction of the tilt-yard, when suddenly withdrawing the handkerchief, he burst into such a convulsion

of laughter, that he was fain to hold fast by Dudley to prevent himself from falling to the ground. "For the love of mercy, my dear kinsman," he at length exclaimed, resuming his customary voice and manner, "do join me, and bear a share in this load of laughter, or it will burst my sides. Oh Heavens ! I feel as though they were already split asunder."

"I can see nothing risible of any sort," said Dudley somewhat seriously—"and indeed the whole scene, I have just witnessed, has been to me an incomprehensible mystery, which it would like me much to hear you explain."

"Look not then so solemn and sapient, I beseech ye, coz, or you will set fire to a new train of laughter, which may blow me up before I can content your curiosity. By Gad's lid ! this lucky thought of mine was my *chef-d'œuvre*, for the which every true courtier will allow that I ought to receive instant promotion, and be canonised after my death in the calendar of the clawbacks. But listen and learn, you, who so wisely held me somedecal too harebrained and-

volatile, to play the courtier's part with good success:—My friend, George Cavendish, the usher, informed me, as we passed to the audience-chamber, that after the royal party had departed from the banquet, my Lord Cardinal, who piques himself upon his oratory, and loses no occasion for its display, must e'en harangue the remaining guests, under pretext of thanking them for their attendance and giving them their dismissal. This was, as usual, a very learned and Ruthful oration, torn probably out of Tully, and coaned over in the morning, wherein he showed his omnipotence, by lugging in the Holy Father by the head and shoulders, although he is at this moment a close prisoner in Rome,—beseeching the prayers of the company for his release; and did so ruefully catterwaul, and affect so doleful a dump upon this tristful treachery of fortune, that all those who had favours to ask in the morning put their kerchiefs incontinently to their eyes, to hide their want of tears, and under this mask pretended to blubber for the head of the church, like so many church-

spouts. Now, though my friend George would not avouch any further ; I, who know my good patron's weak side, and that he will swallow this sort of flattery, when a fat compliment would stick in his throat, will peril a double sovereign to a dandyprat, that he went to his bed in a most maudlin mood of contentment, arising from the joint fumes of his own hippocras and his guests' hypocrisy. This was my cue. No sooner did I perceive, that you had been carrying the letters of Bellerophon,—that the Cardinal was prejudiced against you, as deeming you a mischief-maker and a Lutheran,—than I betook myself to his speech, of which, Heaven be praised ! we neither of us heard a syllable, and I tell thee, cousin mine, that if I can read aright, the peevish yet fond ‘ Go to, boy, go to !’ with which he greeted me, it will send me up another step or two upon the ladder of advancement. ’Twas thus I became Master of the Armoury, and ’tis thus that I will, in the end, become master of my master, if my Lord Cardinal of York do but retain his power, and

my good friend, Jack Dudley, be ever as shrewd and ready as he has proved himself this morning."

"And in the mean time," said Dudley, "his prejudice against myself seems to be as groundless as his prepossession towards you."

"Because, coz, the very name of heresy or disaffection stinks in his high-church nostrils; because you styled him 'my lord' instead of 'your eminence;' and because, moreover, you heard me declare that you were an auditor of his oration, and yet uttered not a syllable of your amazement, admiration, rapture, at his eloquence. Gadzooks, man! why were you not more quick-witted?"

"Had I been even disposed to favour your assertion, he would not hear me speak."

"But you had a handkerchief in your pocket, beneath which you might have been as ecstatic as I was: you might have fainted away, gone into hysterics or fits: you might have occasioned a call for cold water and sal ammoniac, and your fortune would have been made for life."

" My seed gave me no warrant for such duplicity : I came not to ask a favour for myself, but justice for my cousin Cecil."

" Then will you be fully gratified, for I foresee that you will never stand well in his favour, and that he will exact from this Hurlothrumbo of the Tor Hill, a stern and sweeping atonement. He will have none oppressed except by himself or the King; it delights him to show his supremacy by pulling down a powerful wrong-doer like this; you have piqued him by making a devil of Sir Lionel, and when he gets his nose fairly into the forceps of the law, you will see him—

' Tweak him most soundly, as was once done,
Se legends tell us, by Saint Dunstan.' "—

" That is all I need, Sir John; that once accomplished I shall not require his favour, for I shall have no opponent with whom to contend."

" Beshrew me if I think so. If Sir Lionel be such as your speech would make him, he is not one, I ween, who will content himself

with dropping loose charges in the lord-keeper's ear. How came he to such instant knowledge of the abbot's letter?"

" Unless it were by diabolical aid, I am utterly at a loss to resolve you."

" The devils who steaded him upon that occasion may quickly prove your ushers, in inducting you to a prison, if these perilous charges against you—"

" But they are as false as hell!"

" So says one Master Poyns Dudley, being the party accused; but if ten or twenty honest devils come forward to swear the contrary, I tell thee, coz, I had much rather be guilty and out of Sir Lionel's clutches, than innocent and in them. Much easier shall you find it to escape from his sword, formidable as it was, than from the traps and toils, in which he may ensnare you with these charges, however false they may be; and, alack! there is no buxom Béatrice in London to open the prison-door, or untie the hangman's noose, or arrest the executioner's uplifted arm, as she did her father's."

“ You would afford me but lenten solace, Sir John, did I deem that an innocent man could be driven to such a desperate conclusion. How then would you counsel me to act ?”

“ Nay, by Gad’s lid ! I counsel nothing further. You have an ugly battle to fight, in the which I have no wish to be your second ; and indeed I hold it meet and honest to tell you, coz, that henceforth you may be of kith and kin to me, for that I cannot help ; but look not to me for countenance or aid, for that I cannot afford. Willingly would I stand your friend, but that jealous churl Jack Dudley won’t let me. He has sworn that I shall be buried with my head on, of which there might be some doubt were I to meddle in such ticklish gear as a quarrel with Sir Lionel Fitzmaurice. You would not have me make a perjurer of my staunchest well-willer Jack Dudley, and therefore you must allow me to make my bow to your acquaintanceship, until it is of safer character, and so, my gentle coz, for the present I give you the good den.” Taking off his bonnet as he concluded this speech, he made a flourishing

bow of most burlesque ceremoniousness, and was about to depart, when Dudley stopped him. Heartless and selfish as were the principles he avowed; mean and hypocritical as had been his conduct towards his patron, the lord cardinal; openly as he professed his resolution to advance himself by similar falsehood and duplicity; there was so good-humoured, blithe and familiar an assurance in his manner, when not in the presence of his superiors, that Dudley, though he might not respect his character, could hardly feel angry with him. Aware that he had not the smallest claim upon his good offices, beyond that of a boyish acquaintance and a distant relationship, he could not expect that he should implicate himself in a quarrel with so desperate an adversary as Sir Lionel. Although his introduction to the cardinal might not have been attended with all the results he anticipated, he was at least obliged to him for his good intentions; and as he recollects no other friend in London to whom he could immediately apply, he ventured, before they parted, to ask two other favours of Sir John. One was

that he would recommend to him some man of law, who might prepare for him the necessary depositions to substantiate his proceedings against Sir Lionel; and the other that he would dine with him in return for his yesterday's treat in the city. "Not that I can promise you," said Dudley, "such royal and luxurious fare as our host of the Swan in Eastcheap provided for us, under your scientific catering; but my landlord of the Holy Lamb has promised me some French ragouts, and a pheasant dressed in the Paris mode, *à la Sainte Ménéhould*, which, with a flask of Candian wine, and a dessert of marchpane or quincecake to help it off, may not perhaps mislike your palate."

"For your first request," replied Sir John, "give me your tablet, and I will forthwith write you down the name and address of a shrewd and stirring man of law, who will briakly enable the Lord Keeper to fulfil his promises touching this doughty Sir Mahound of the Tor Hill."

Returning the tablet to Dudley, after having made the required entry, he continued--"And

for your second proposition, cousin mine, by Bacchus and Ceres, by spit and spiggot, it likes me well, since it is better to part with a shake of the flagon than of the hand, and a wet whistle rather than a dry ‘good day.’ Wherefore lead on, for the clock-work of my stomach is preparing to strike the dinner-hour, and I will match it for punctuality against Westminster Tom, or the sun himself.”

“ Its importunity shall quickly be allayed,” said Dudley, turning towards the tavern, “ and I hope it will not quarrel with the French fare I have provided for its refection.”

“ Quarrel with it, coz! provided only that it be entreated after a delicate and toothsome fashion by the cook, there is nothing edible, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, that comes amiss to me. Small as it shows, my stomach is a Noah’s ark, wherein there is a coop for all birds, from the titmouse to the ostrich, a stall for the ox, a shed for the calf, a sty for the hog, a park for deer, a warren for rabbits, a store-room for fruit, a dairy for milk, curds, and whey; and a cellar for all sorts of liquids, from

small beer to hippocras. Is this the house ? Ha ! its odour is of good omen, it savours well of ambergris—it is of the rich and genuine *haut-gout*; I swear it by mine uncle's life, and that 's a serious oath,—for he sends me yearly a pipe of rich canary from Hull, and a fat buck from Sherwood."

By this time they had entered the tavern, the landlord of which, taking Dudley aside, apprised him that there had been two or three persons inquiring for him, whom he judged by their appearance to be apparitors or summoners from some of the upper courts, on which account he counselled him to decamp as quietly and quickly as possible, if he had rendered himself obnoxious to any of the formidable tribunals, to whom these applicants seemed to belong. In the indignant consciousness of innocence, Dudley replied with more courage than prudence, that he had offended no law and disdained to abscond; with which words he returned in a somewhat stately mood to the table, upon which the attendants were already beginning to serve the dinner. Ere this process was

completed, it was announced to him that one of the parties who had previously called had now returned: repairing to him in an adjoining room, the stranger inquired whether his name were Dudley, to which receiving an affirmative answer, he delivered a paper into his hand, made a bow, and immediately withdrew. It was a citation from the Ecclesiastical Court, summoning him to appear and answer to different charges of heresy, of which he stood accused, upon the oaths of various witnesses. While he was reading over this document, not less astounded at the promptitude of Sir Lionel's machinations, to which he immediately attributed it, than at the audacious perjuries with which he supported his false charges, he observed through the curtain of an open window, that looked into the dinner-apartment, a second stranger, wearing the garb of a pursuivant, who made straitway up to Sir John, and also inquired whether his name were Dudley.

"The same, Sir, and at your service," replied Sir John; who, without waiting for his companion, had commenced an eager attack upon the

French ragout—"though, by Gad's lid ! I never saw your face before. What may be your pleasure, friend ; am I wanted at the Tower?"

"I have no order for conveying you thither at present," said the pursuivant—"but here is my warrant for arresting you, and carrying you before the Lords of the Star Chamber, for certain treasonous sayings touching his grace's divorce, whereon you stand indicted on oath."

"Ods-pittikins ! I guessed as much," exclaimed Sir John, casting his eye over the warrant ; "this is not for me, good Sir, but for my cousin or kinsman, Poyns Dudley, whose name you may here see inserted at full length. He will be back anon, and you may bear him away, an' you will, to gaol or Jevicho, to noose, axe, or faggot, so you mar not my discussion of this ragout, which is of most ineffable savour, and not less exquisite gustation."

"Forsooth, sir, I am not to be so glibly cozened as you ween. You confessed your name, you expected a summons to the Tower, which is as good as to confess your guilt ; so prythee

sir, away, away ! for the lords are waiting, and I may not trifle with my strict orders."

" Why, what a peremptory ass thou art ! once more I tell thee, I am Sir John Dudley, Master of the Armoury in the Tower ; whereas this warrant has reference to a luckless wight yclept Poyns, whom you may impound and welcome, for my friend Jack Dudley whispers me that it is high time to shake him off."

" I will make sure of you at all events," said the pursuivant, laying his hand upon Sir John's shoulder ; " and if I have caught the wrong bird, it is but to let you fly again ; so maugre all your fetches and devices, you shall troop, and on the instant too."

" I ask you not," said Sir John, with a mock solemnity, " whether you have a heart ? but have you a nose ? can you olfact this redolent ragout, and yet tear me from it, ere I have embraced it with my palate ?"

" Nay then, by the mass ! I 'm no such hoddy-peak as to be fooled 'o this sort ;" exclaimed the pursuivant, who was proceeding to force his pri-

soner from the table, when Sir John, declaring that the matter began to grow serious, cried out aloud ; “ Hip ! hollo ! landlord, tapsters ! search out my kinsman and namesake, who must be still somewhere in the house ; and let this sturdy blunderer bear him off to dungeon or the devil ; bring me the pheasants à la Sainte Ménehould ; and let me finish my tête-à-tête with the ragout ; for, by Gad’s lid ! I shall grow hot if it be suffered to grow cold.”

Under any other circumstances, Dudley would have revolted from the thought of suffering another to be arrested for himself; but, disgusted at the heartless indifference which Sir John had evinced, knowing that the mistake would be almost immediately discovered, and feeling the paramount importance of consulting with the lawyer how to avoid an imprisonment which might utterly defeat all his plans for Cecil’s extrication, he resolved to seize the golden opportunity that presented itself, and make an instant escape from the tavern ; determining, however, if his kinsman got into any trouble, which was altogether improbable, to come for-

ward and exculpate him by his own surrender. In pursuance of this determination, he walked out of the front door unobstructed, and passing the old octagonal gothic Cross, which took its name from the village of Charing, struck across the fields to the Haymarket, then a wide road, bounded with hedges instead of houses, and sitting down beneath a tree began to commune with himself, as to what steps it would be most prudent to take in this pressing emergency. After a short deliberation, it appeared to him safest to betake himself to the man of law whose address he had received, and consult with him, not only respecting the depositions to be prepared for the lord-keeper, but as to the most fitting measures for his own safety.

On referring to his tablets, it appeared that he resided in the Middle Temple, towards which he accordingly bent his way; but, wishing to avoid the Strand, for fear of encountering any of the party from whom he had just made his escape, he turned up to the left, and coasting along the wall of Convent Garden, which then belonged to the Abbot of Westminster,

and extended from St. Martin's to Drury-lane, he arrived unmolested at the Middle Temple. Without stopping to admire the newly-erected gate, he passed immediately to the lawyer's chamber, whom he luckily found at home, and who instantly set to work in preparing the necessary documents and depositions, which Dudley verified by oath. Having received a sum of money for that purpose, the man of business undertook to lay them before the lord-keeper, and to urge the progress of the suit with every possible attention and expedition.

Thus far all was satisfactory ; but when Dudley proceeded to state the predicament, in which he was placed with Sir Lionel, the infamous calumnies he had already brought forward, and the formidable measures by which he was prepared to support them in the Star Chamber and the courts, the lawyer's countenance fell ; he drew in his breath with a hissing noise, and shaking his head as he puffed it out again, exclaimed “ An ugly case, by my fackins ! a most ugly case ! for unless my lord cardinal lay him quickly by the heels, as he threatens, you are

doomed and lost. Well do I know this Sir Lionel by name and fame. He is a great man, a wonderful man, a marvellous genius, and I have never known him undertake the ruin of an adversary without succeeding by fair or foul. Truly his skill in these matters passes all belief; it is most admirable and amazing."

" But in the present case," said Dudley, " as I am perfectly innocent——"

" Tush!" interrupted the lawyer — " how many men can you bring forward, who, though they know you not from Adam, shall make false oaths to your truth and loyalty?"

" I am no suborner, Sir," replied Dudley, rather fiercely.

" Ah! there it is," resumed his companion very calmly—" you come as usual quite unprepared, and unfortunately there is no competing with Sir Lionel in perjury; he has nearly the whole command of the market. Oh, he's a wonderfully great man!"

Such was his professional admiration of the knight's tortuous chicanery and widely-ramified

perjuries, that he was proceeding to recount several instances of his exquisite adroitness in these respects, until reminded by Dudley that he came not to listen to his former atrocities, but to defeat those that were now hatching against himself, and take advice as to his own security.

"This is much too grave and perilous a matter for hasty counsel," said the lawyer—"I must search the different courts, to know the nature of the accusations against you, and by whom substantiated. This will I do to-day; to-morrow we may confer together more fully, and with better advisement: and that no time may be lost, I will to the river forthwith and take boat for the Star-chamber. Oh, he's truly a great man, a wonderful creature, that Sir Lionel!"

However formidable might have been Sir Lionel's enmity in his own immediate vicinity, where he had the command of numerous dependants, and might intimidate those who were within the wide sphere of his influence, Dudley had little expected to find his nefarious con-

spiracies exciting as much terror in London as in Somersetshire. He was truly

"A bold bad man, who scrupled not to name
Gorgon, the prince of darkness and deep night,
At which Cocytus quakes and Styx is put to flight;"

and who, by the report of others well conversant with his villanies, had never failed in blasting the fame or destroying the life of whomsoever he marked for vengeance. Sir John's quick withdrawal from Dudley's acquaintanceship, the moment he heard the name of his diabolical enemy ; the lawyer's instant misgivings when possessed of the same information ; his own experience of his adversary's ruthless character ; and his dark suspicions of the supernatural aid, by which he was abetted and upheld—all combined to show him that he had entered into a contest of a most desperate nature, the result of which must be fatal to one or other of the contending parties. Nor could he shake off an unusual feeling of despondency, when he reflected that the great power of his antagonist, and his determination to employ all means, however infamous and

flagitious, gave him a fearful advantage over an unaided individual, who had no other champion than his innocence.

He was passing slowly and thoughtfully along, under the influence of these impressions, when, as he again approached the Temple-gate, he saw two figures under one of the side arches, whom he immediately recognized for the rascally attorney, usually resident in the Tor House as the agent of Sir Lionel's machinations, and one of the brawling bullies who acted as a sort of lieutenant to Captain Basset. Both were armed, both were obviously watching him ; they had apparently tracked him to the house he had just quitted, and would doubtless dog his footsteps that he might become a sure prey to the blood-hounds of the law, from whom he had escaped in the morning. At another time he would, perhaps, have made fiercely up to them, and have endeavoured to free himself from their espionage by his rapier ; but his spirit was now somewhat subdued, by his sense of the deep dangers that were closing around and environing him on every side, and his first

impulse was to elude their vigilance by flight. Passing, therefore, rapidly through the wooden bar which, with its chain and posts, then formed the only separation between Fleet-street and the Strand, he hurried towards St. Clement's church, which he entered; but perceiving through one of the windows, that his pursuers were pressing towards the same spot, he again quitted it, and made for the Strand, along which he hurried with an eager step, irresolute which way to turn, or what plan to adopt.

At that period the waters, flowing from the higher ground on which Catherine-street now stands, passed under the Strand Bridge, and found their way to the river, along a wide, noisome ditch, flanked on one side by miserable tenements and hovels. Into this opening he turned, suddenly resolving to seek a boat and cross the river; but he had only passed a short way down the lane, when the word "Lodgings" pasted against the wall of a house, that presented a rather more decent exterior than the others, suggested to him the idea of concealing himself for the present by taking up a short abode in this quarter, the obscurity

and wretchedness of which offered a more secure asylum, than he could hope to obtain in any tavern or inn. At all events it presented a chance of escape from the danger that immediately threatened, and he accordingly pushed open the door and walked in, gratified to find that the interior wore an air of decency and cleanliness, which could hardly have been expected in a neighbourhood so forlorn and squalid. So quietly had he entered, that he concluded his intrusion had been unnoticed, or that the proprietor of the house was absent, for no one appeared; and he therefore placed himself at the narrow casement, so as not to be discovered from without, where he had presently the satisfaction of seeing his pursuers hurry down the lane, as if they suspected his purpose of making for the river, and were speeding to forestall it. Deeming himself now safely ensconced, he called for the landlady, whose appearance was not less prepossessing than that of her apartment. Old she was indeed, and lean and withered; and her stature, which had apparently been always beneath the mid-

dling size, had been still further reduced by the decrepitude of age: sorrow and suffering seemed also to have combined with time in leaving their united traces upon her countenance; but still there was something rather winning than forbidding in its expression; while her manner was mild and gracious, her language elegant, her clothes, although of the homeliest materials, scrupulously clean, and not unbecomingly arranged; her whole appearance betokening one who had seen better days, though now broken down by time, trouble, and poverty.

Won by the benevolence of her look, which not even wrinkles and unhappiness had been able to efface, Dudley frankly stated the motives of his intrusion, and his wish to become her lodger; assigning as an additional reason, the vicinity of her house to the office of his lawyer, whom he should have daily occasion to consult. "Alas! Sir," she exclaimed, "I have been too long acquainted with persecution and woe, not to be filled with ruth towards others who are thus assailed. Right welcome are you to

my humble roof, and if it might so please you that I should follow these men and track their course, I will don my hood upon the instant, and bring you tidings of their steps; though, sooth to say, I am not now so fleet of foot, as that you might deem I was once famous for dancing the galliard." A momentary suspicion darted across Dudley's mind, that this proposition might be made in the intention of betraying him; but her frank and benignant aspect re-assuring him, he thankfully accepted her offer, and in a minute afterwards she quitted the house. A short interval elapsed, not altogether free from anxiety and misgiving on Dudley's part, when she returned, informing him that the men in question had betaken themselves to the river, in apparent pursuit of a boat which had just quitted the shore, and to which they frequently pointed, as if imagining that it contained the object of their search. Relieved from his apprehensions by this intelligence, Dudley began to recollect that he had been deprived of his ragout and his pheasants, and felt an eager desire for some species of sub-

stitute. This was presently provided by his friendly and obliging landlady ; and though the viands thus served up to him were less rich and rare, than those from which he had been so unpleasantly compelled to take flight, there was a cleanliness and even a nicety in the appointments of his little table, which, combining with his previous exertions, enabled him to make a heartier meal than he would probably have enjoyed at the luxurious board of the Holy Lamb.

After a lonely and cheerless evening, he retired to the little sleeping-room, which, with a sitting apartment of the same dimensions, constituted the whole of his lodgings ; and finding every thing here as tidy and comfortable as he could wish, he threw himself upon the bed, jaded both in mind and body, and by no means reconciled to the forlorn and perilous prospect before him. Spite of the increasing horror which he felt towards Sir Lionel, the beautiful and stately Beatrice presented herself to him in his dreams as the preserver of his life, whom he could not and ought not to forget, whatever

might be the enormities of which her father was capable ; while it occurred to him in his sleep, that he had not yet fulfilled his resolution of writing to decline the hand of the phlegmatic and automatic Bridget, or the honour of making any addition, in his own person, to the flesh and blood machinery of Beckhampton Hall.

Taking it for granted that Sir Lionel's myrmidons would lie in ambush for him about the attorney's dwelling, he resolved to postpone his visit the next day until it was quite dark, nor would he even allow his landlady to see the lawyer on his behalf, although in her friendly anxiety for his welfare she offered to become his messenger to any part of the town. Constituting himself a close prisoner till night-fall, he at length proceeded to the office, where he received such intelligence from his agent, as was rather calculated to increase than diminish his previous apprehensions. He had never quitted his office, he said, without being dogged by some of Sir Lionel's emissaries, who probably thought he was proceeding to visit his client ; and upon searching the different courts, he had

found the accusations against Dudley so skilfully constructed, so ingeniously, so beautifully dove-tailed and strengthened by the most circumstantial perjuries, that he was lost in admiration of that matchless artist, who never allowed his victims a single chance of escape. He expressed his decided conviction, that Dudley would be discovered, however closely he might be concealed ; that he would be borne down by subornation and chicanery, however innocent ; and under these circumstances he counselled him to take sanctuary, and wait the result of the Lord Cardinal's proceedings, who was now possessed of the necessary papers for instituting the commission of inquiry, and who, if once satisfied of Sir Lionel's guilt, would tear him down from his elevation, and strip him of his usurped power, till he was as tame and as bare as a plucked pigeon.

This advice Dudley resolved to adopt, only hesitating whether he should take sanctuary in the city, where the church of St. Martin's-le-Grand extended that privilege to a small surrounding space; or in the precincts of West-

minster Abbey, where he would have a wider range. Giving the preference to the latter, he requested the lawyer to secure him apartments within the verge, and returned for the present to his obscure lodgings by the Strand Bridge.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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